

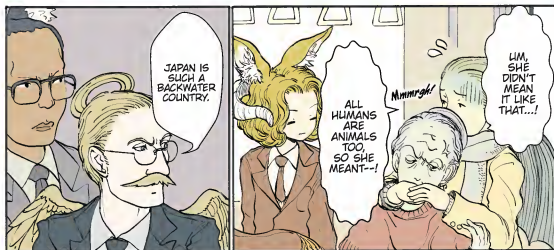
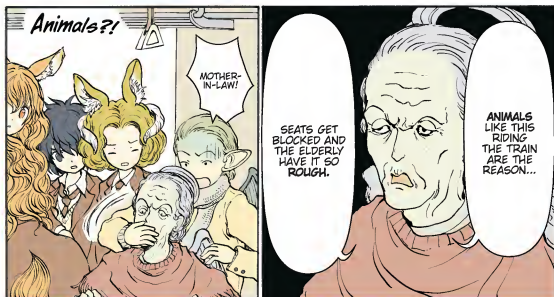
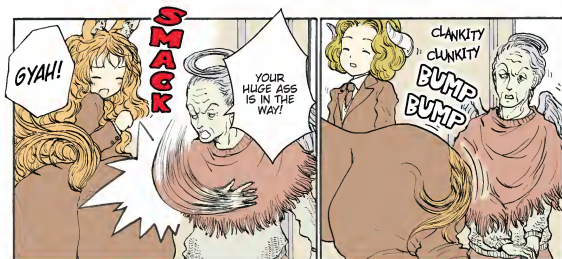
A Centaur's Life

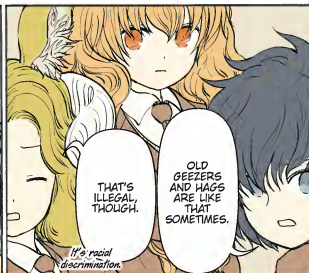
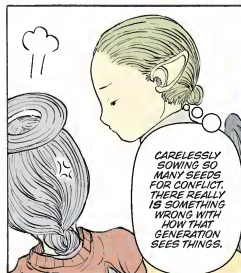
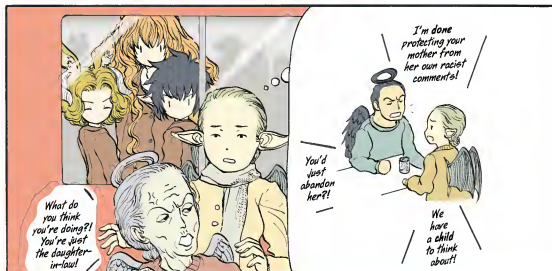


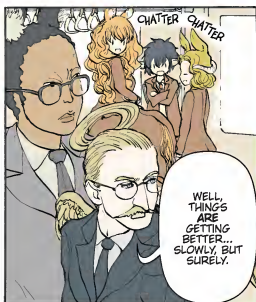
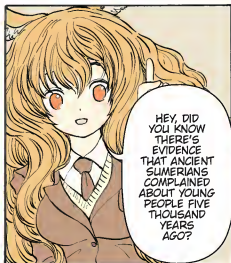
story & art
KEI MURAYAMA

CHAPTER 21









A Centaur's Life

Vol. 5



story & art
KEI MURAYAMA

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

A Centaur's Life

story and art by KEI MURAYAMA

VOLUME 5

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CENTAUR NO NAYAMI VOLUME 5

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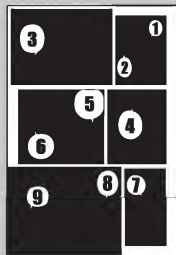
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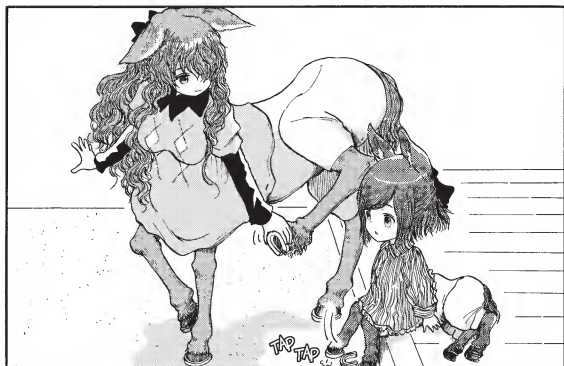
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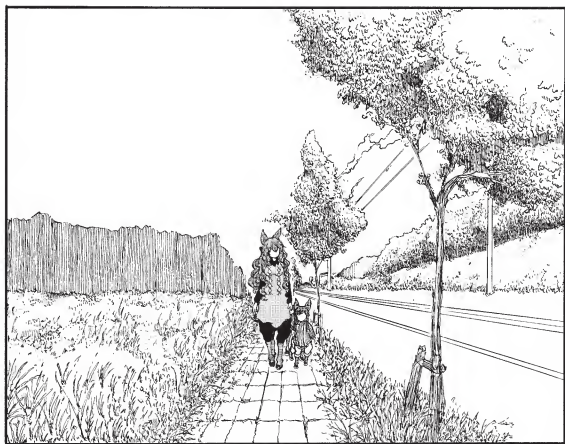
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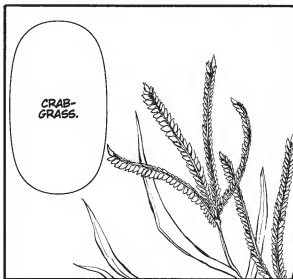
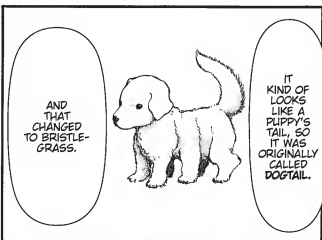
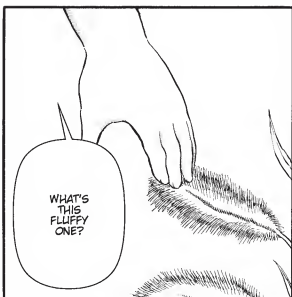
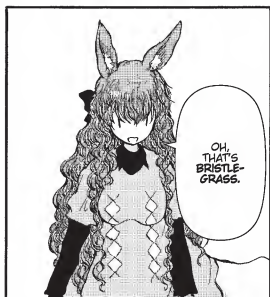


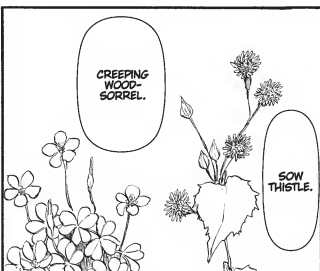
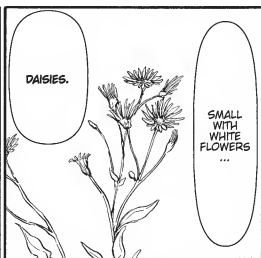
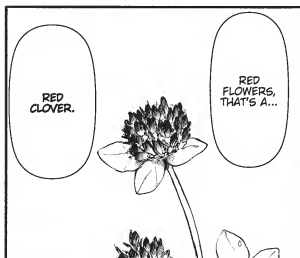
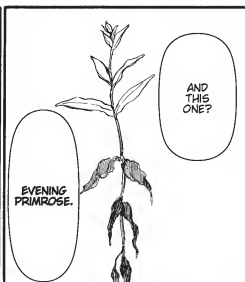
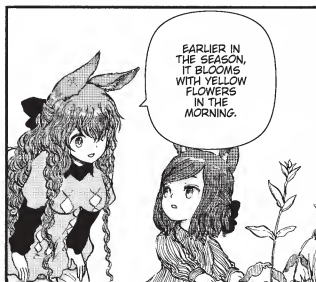
CHAPTER 22

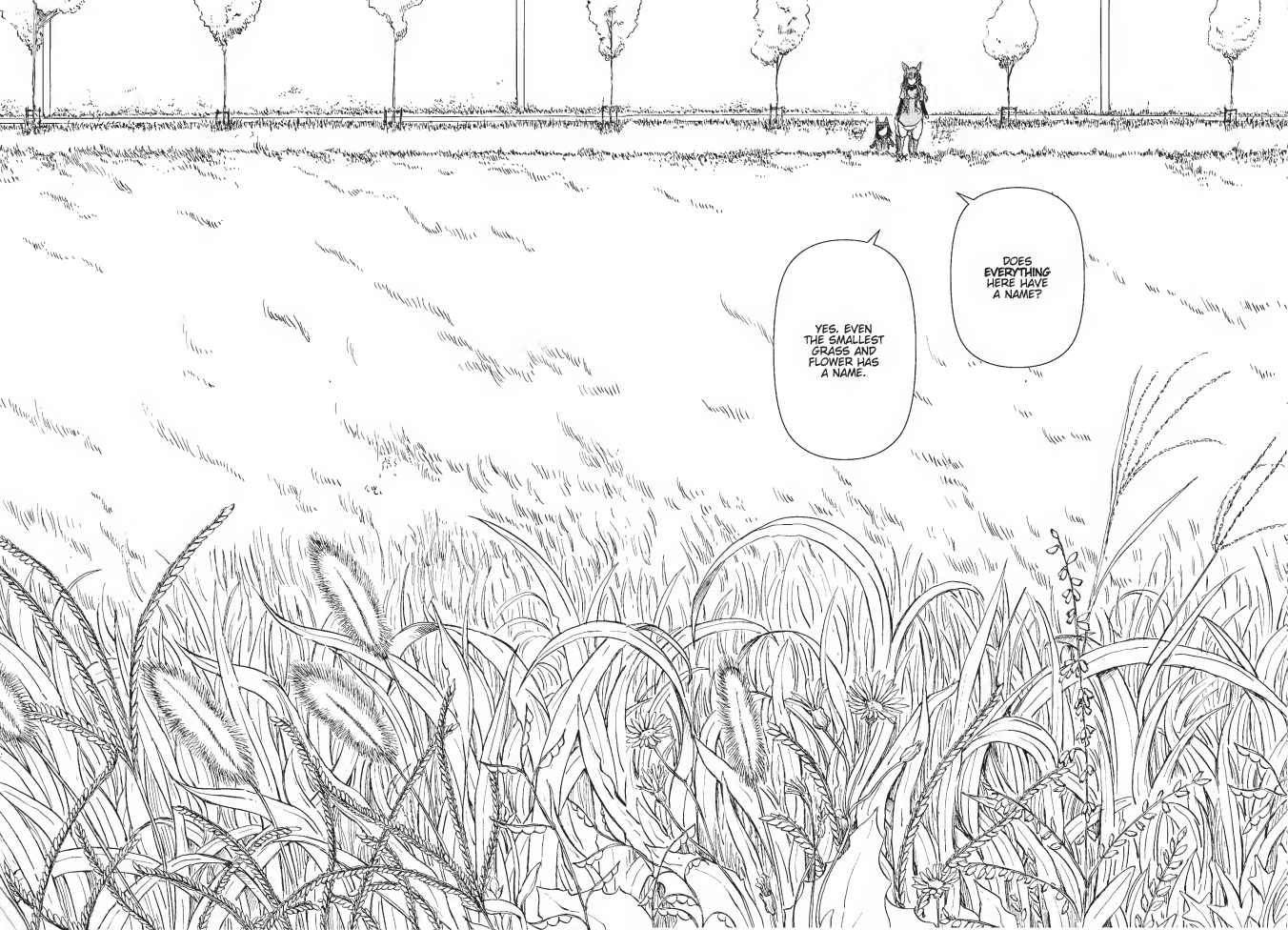






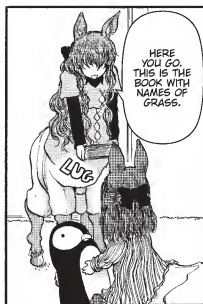






YES. EVEN
THE SMALLEST
GRASS AND
FLOWER HAS
A NAME.

DOES
EVERYTHING
HERE HAVE
A NAME?



A CentaUr's Life

MESOZOIC CREATURES

DINOSAURS & THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: THE DAWN OF THE AGE OF DINOSAURS

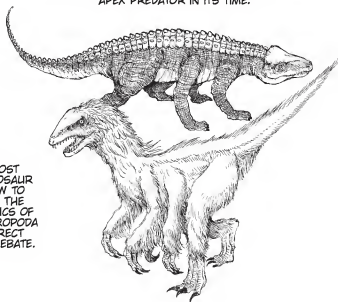
WHEN IT COMES TO MUSEUM EXHIBITS, DINOSAURS ARE ALWAYS INCREDIBLY POPULAR. THOSE MONSTROUS MONOLITHS OF RESTORED BONE HAVE ALWAYS GENERATED TREMENDOUS INTEREST. BUT JUST WHAT KINDS OF CREATURES WERE THESE DINOSAURS, ANYWAY? AND HOW DID THEY DIFFER FROM THE REPTILES WE SEE TODAY?

DINOSAURS WERE CREATURES THAT LIVED DURING THE MESOZOIC ERA (APPROXIMATELY 252 MILLION TO 66 MILLION YEARS AGO) AND WERE MEMBERS OF THE SAME GROUP OF ANIMALS AS LIZARDS, CROCODILES, AND BIRDS, KNOWN AS *DIAPSID*S. (INCIDENTALLY, MAMMALS EVOLVED FROM A SEPARATE GROUP KNOWN AS *SYNAPSID*S. THUS, DINOSAURS ARE NOT OUR ANCESTORS.)

ON THE GEOLOGICAL TIMESCALE, THE MESOZOIC ERA INCLUDES--FROM EARLIEST TO LATEST--THE TRIASSIC, JURASSIC, AND CRETACEOUS PERIODS. THE EARLIEST DINOSAURS APPEARED IN THE FORM OF ERECT-WALKING BIPEDS DURING THE MIDDLE TRIASSIC. SO WHAT KIND OF TIME PERIOD WAS THE TRIASSIC? GEOLOGICAL TIME SCALES ARE TYPICALLY MARKED BY SPECIES EXTINCTIONS BROUGHT ON BY SHIFTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT. AT THE END OF THE PERMIAN PERIOD, WHICH PRECEDED THE TRIASSIC, OVER 80% OF THE EARTH'S SPECIES WERE WIPED OUT, MARKING ONE OF THE MOST TREMENDOUS CATASTROPHES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. WITH A SURPLUS OF NEWLY OPENED ECOLOGICAL NICHES TO BE FILLED, DINOSAURS MADE THEIR ENTRANCE. HOWEVER, THESE NEWLY EMERGED DINOSAURS DID NOT INHERIT A POSITION OF DOMINANCE AMONGST LARGE ORGANISMS; RATHER, THAT SEAT WENT TO THE RELATIVES OF CROCODILES.

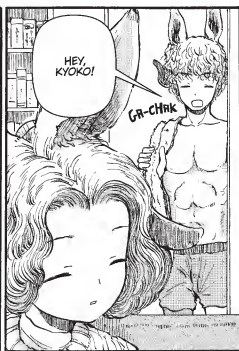
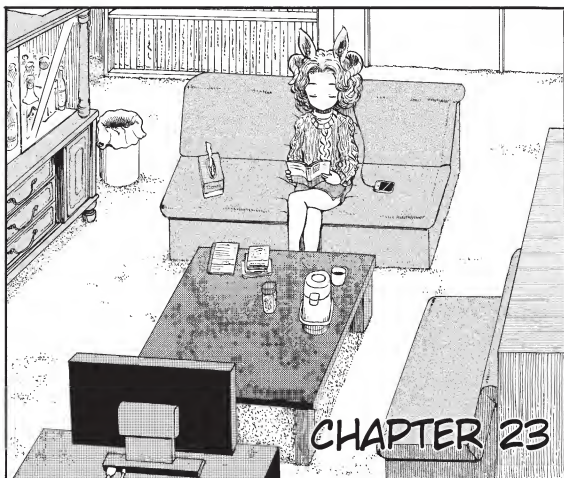
POSTOSUCHUS

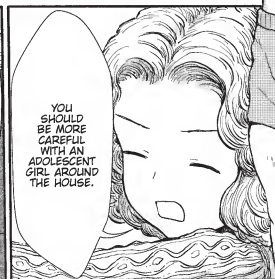
A CROCODILIAN FROM THE MIDDLE AND LATE TRIASSIC WHICH COULD GROW UP TO FIVE METERS IN LENGTH. IT IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN AN APEX PREDATOR IN ITS TIME.



EORAPTOR

ONE OF THE EARLIEST AND MOST PRIMITIVE DINOSAURS, THIS DINOSAUR FROM THE LATE TRIASSIC GREW TO ABOUT ONE METER IN LENGTH. THE EO RAPTOR BORE CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH THE THEROPODA AND SAUROPODA SUBORDERS, MAKING ITS CORRECT CLASSIFICATION A SUBJECT OF DEBATE.

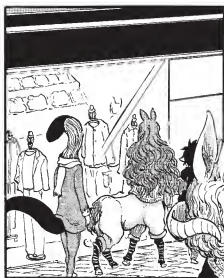






WELL, SINCE YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF LUNCH TOMORROW AND I HAVE A PRACTICE MATCH, CAN YOU MAKE ME A PACKED LUNCH?



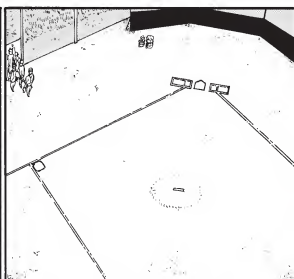
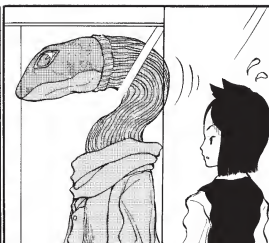
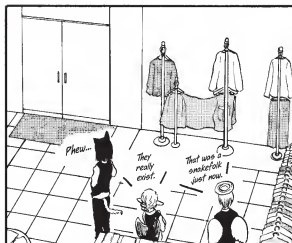


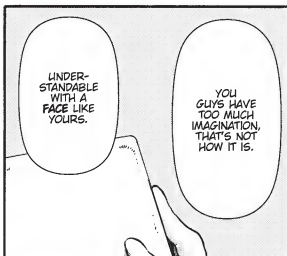
SO...
YOU
MADE
IT FOR
HIM?

IT WAS
THE ONLY
WAY TO
SHUT
HIM UP.

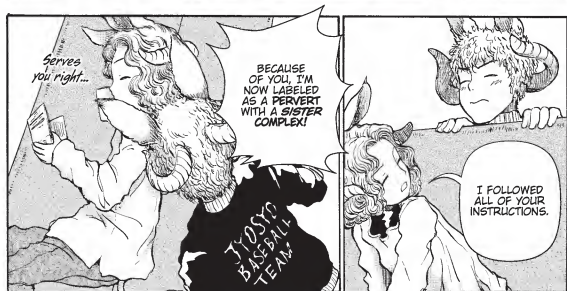
EEP, A
SNAKE-
FOLK!

OUR STORE
DOESN'T
CARRY ANY
ITEMS FOR
SNAKEFOLK...
WILL WE BE
REPORTED?!









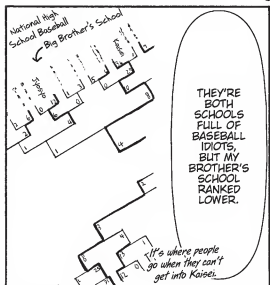


*Fine,
fine!*

IT WAS
THE ONLY
WAY TO
SHUT
HIM UP.



AS AN APOLOGY, HE TOLD ME TO BRING MY FRIENDS TO CHEER FOR THEIR GAME AGAINST KAISEI.



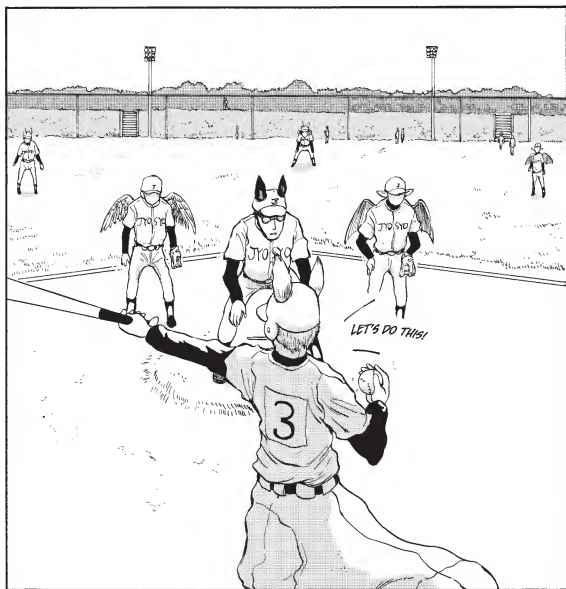
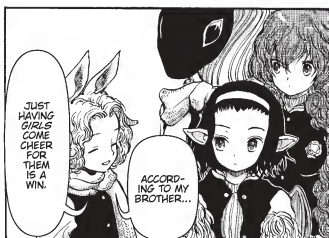
THEY'RE BOTH SCHOOLS FULL OF BASEBALL IDIOTS, BUT MY BROTHER'S SCHOOL RANKED LOWER.

It's where people go when they can't get into Kaisei.



CAN YOUR
BROTHER'S
TEAM BEAT
THEM?

KAISEI IS
GOOD...
THEY
WENT TO
THE HIGH
SCHOOL
BASEBALL
INVITA-
TIONAL.





So
passionate
over a
practice
match.

LOOKS
LIKE
KAISEI'S
SWEATY
CHEERING
SQUAD IS
HERE,
TOO.

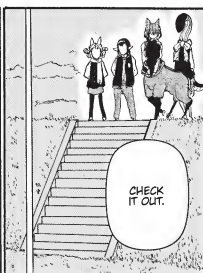


NARAKU'S
LITTLE
SISTER
AND HER
FRIENDS
ARE
HERE?



YOU
CAN TELL
JUST BY
LOOKING.

THE ONE
ON THE FAR
LEFT MUST
BE NARAKU'S
SISTER.



CHECK
IT OUT.



UM...
IS IT
RACIST
TO SAY
SHE'S
NOT MY
TYPE?

WHAT
ABOUT
THAT
ONE?

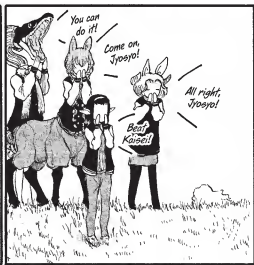
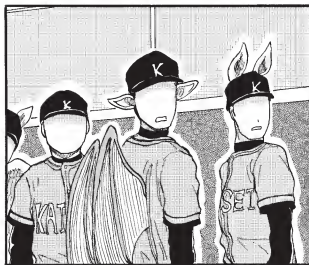


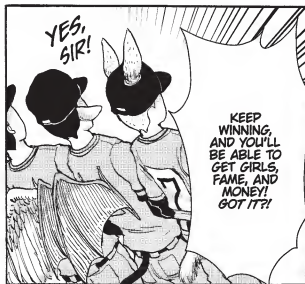
WHOA...
HER
FRIENDS
ARE ALL
PRETTY
HOT.

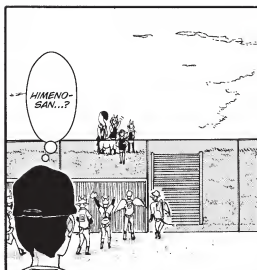
Naraku
better not
be dating
any of
them.

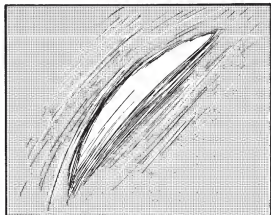
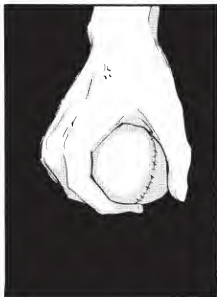
This is
the first
time I've
watched
a real
baseball
game. So
exciting!

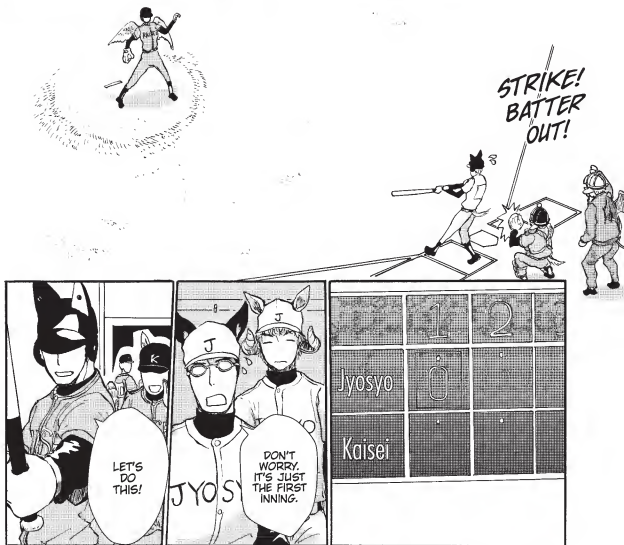
It's
pretty
much the
same as
softball.

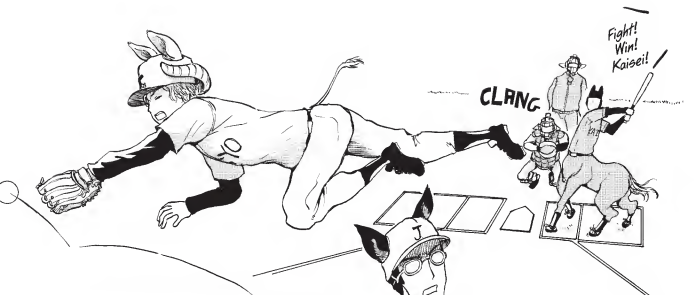




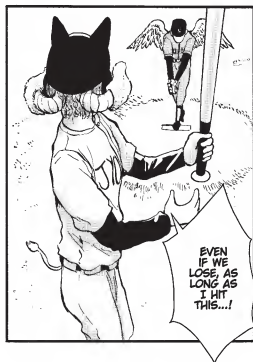


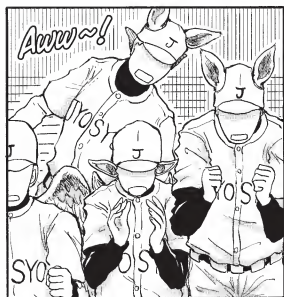
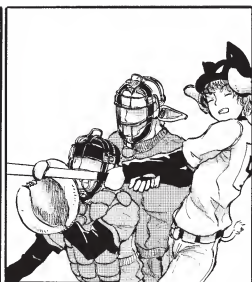


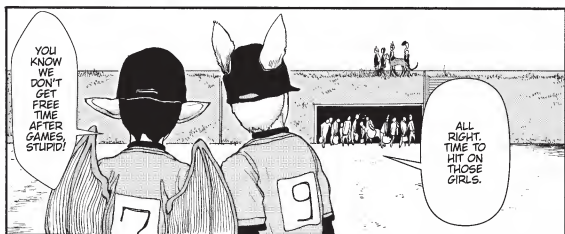
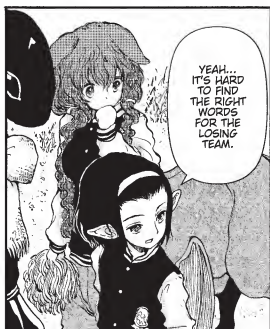
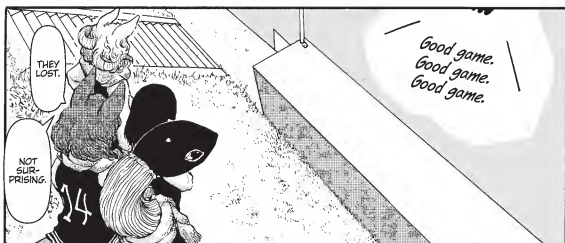


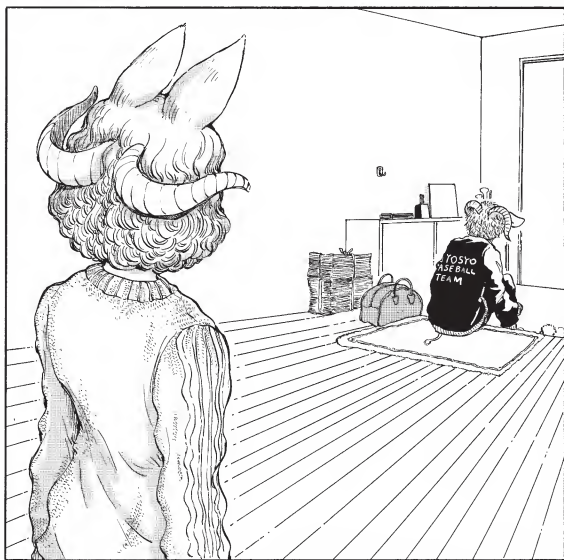


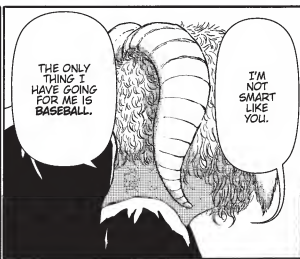
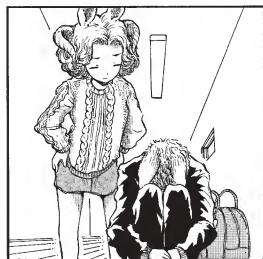
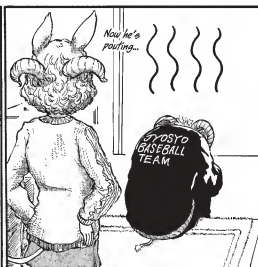
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Jyosyo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kaisei	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0

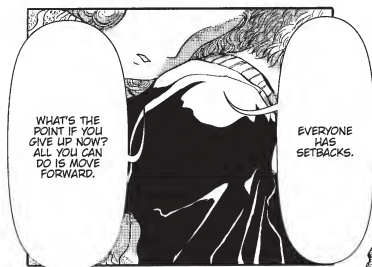














A CentaUr's Life

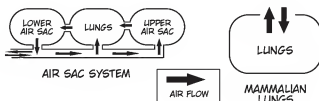
MESOZOIC CREATURES

DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: ON THE PROGRESSION OF DINOSAURS AND THEIR AIR SAC SYSTEM

THE WORLD DURING THE TRIASSIC PERIOD WAS ONE OF INTENSE HEAT AND LOW OXYGEN. DURING THE PALEOZOIC ERA, THE EARTH'S OXYGEN CONCENTRATION REACHED A HEIGHT OF 35%, DROPPING ALL THE WAY DOWN TO 10% BY THE END OF THE TRIASSIC (IN MODERN TIMES, IT IS AT APPROXIMATELY 20%).

AS SUCH, THE CLOSING OF THE TRIASSIC PERIOD BROUGHT WITH IT ANOTHER MASS EXTINCTION. DINOSAURS MANAGED TO SURVIVE, AND AS THE EARTH'S OXYGEN LEVEL GRADUALLY INCREASED IN THE SUBSEQUENT JURASSIC AND CRETACEOUS PERIODS, THEY ACTUALLY INCREASED IN DIVERSITY AND SECURED THEIR POSITION OF DOMINANCE. BUT WHAT ALLOWED THEM TO DO THIS?

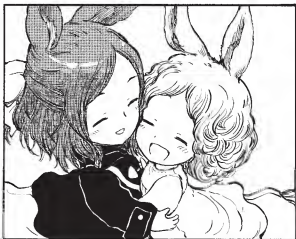
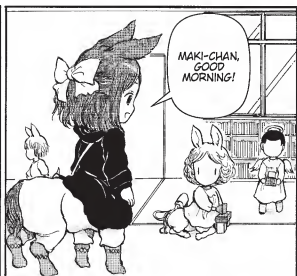
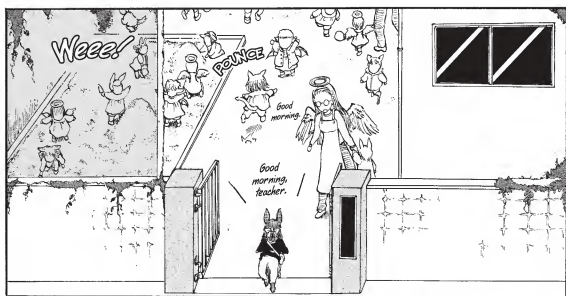
DINOSAURS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE HAD A RESPIRATORY ORGAN CALLED AN AIR SAC, MUCH LIKE THAT OF MODERN BIRDS (OR MORE ACCURATELY, BIRDS INHERITED THIS AIR SAC FEATURE FROM DINOSAURS). IN CONTRAST TO THE TWO-WAY BREATHING METHOD OF MAMMALS, WHERE THE EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF THE THORAX AND DIAPHRAGM FILLS AND EMPTIES THE LUNGS, THE AIR SAC SYSTEM IS MORE EFFICIENT. THE AIR ENTERS THE AIR SAC, PASSES THROUGH THE LUNGS AND THEN FLOWS INTO ANOTHER AIR SAC, WHICH FINALLY EXPELS THE AIR. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS EFFICIENT RESPIRATORY SYSTEM IS WHAT ALLOWS BIRDS TO GENERATE THE VAST AMOUNTS OF ENERGY NEEDED TO BEAT THEIR WINGS AND STAY ALOFT. IT IS THIS VERY SAME METHOD THAT ALLOWED THE DINOSAURS TO ENDURE A LOW-OXYGEN AGE, PUSH THEIR WAY PAST OTHER SPECIES, AND PROGRESS AS A GROUP.

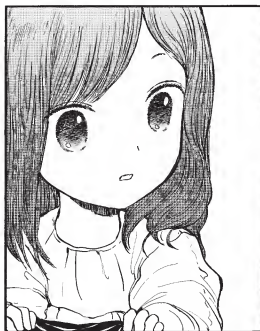


OVIRAPTOR

A THEROPOD TWO TO THREE METERS IN LENGTH THAT THRIVED DURING THE LATE CRETACEOUS PERIOD. DUE TO AN EARLY FOSSIL DISCOVERY IN WHICH THE OVIRAPTOR WAS FOUND OVERLAIN WITH A PILE OF EGGS, IT WAS GIVEN THE NICKNAME "EGG TAKER." BUT FURTHER RESEARCH REVEALED THAT THE DINOSAUR WAS IN FACT PROTECTING ITS OWN EGGS. HOWEVER, THE RAPTOR'S TOOTHLESS BEAK AND UPPER BONE STRUCTURE RESEMBLE THAT OF THE EGG-EATING SNAKE, SUGGESTING IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN EGG-EATER NONETHELESS.





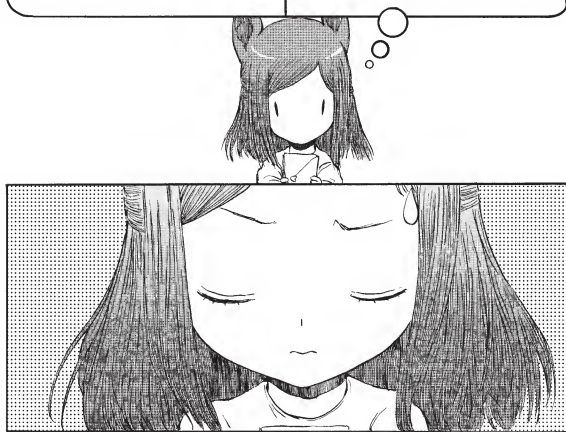
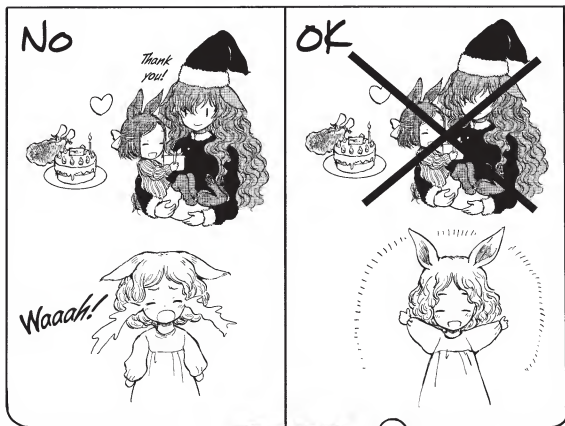


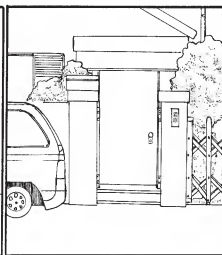
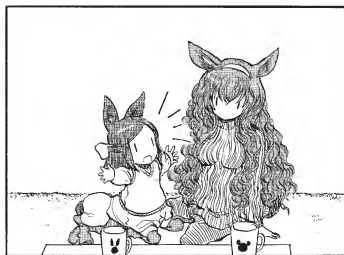
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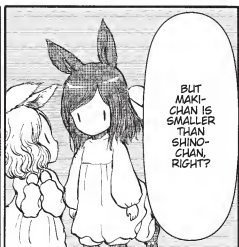


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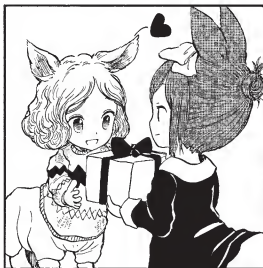
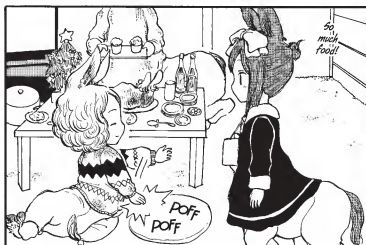
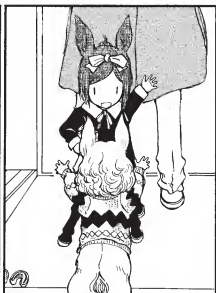
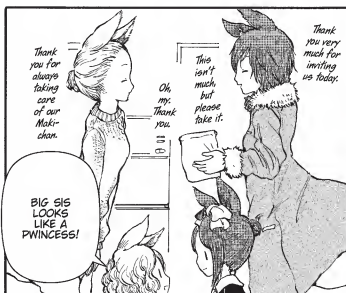


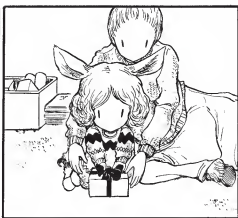
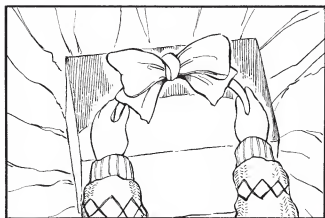


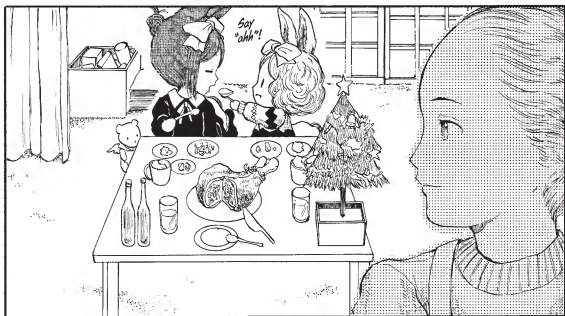
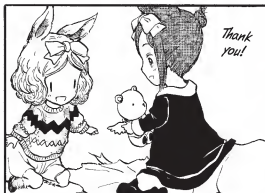


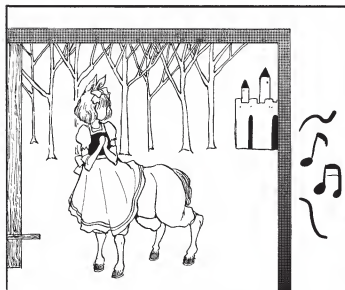
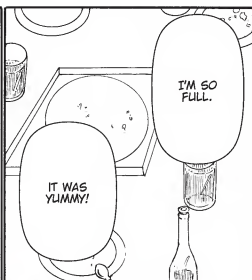
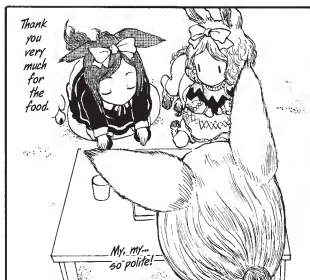


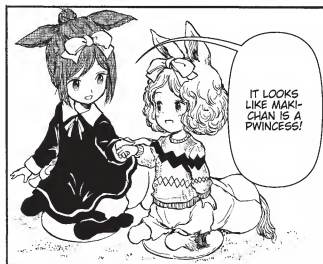


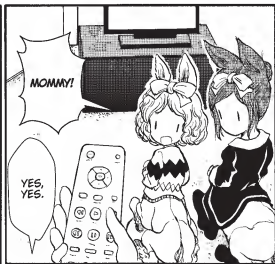
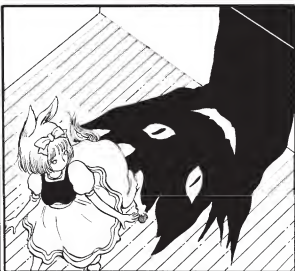
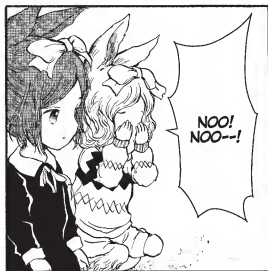
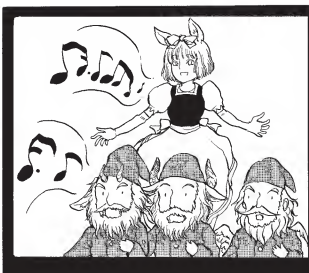


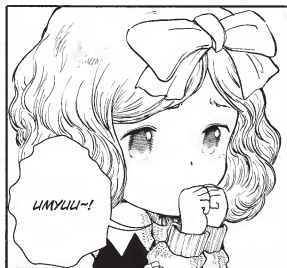
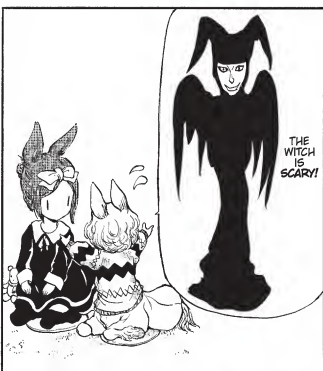


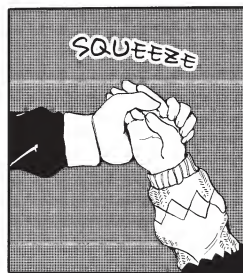


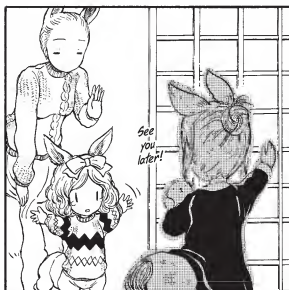
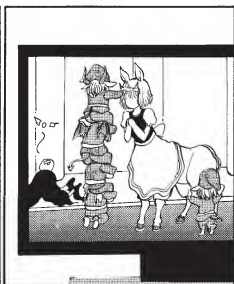


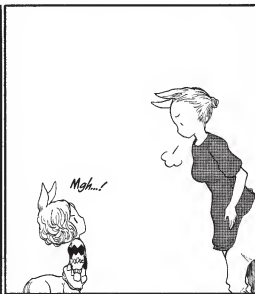
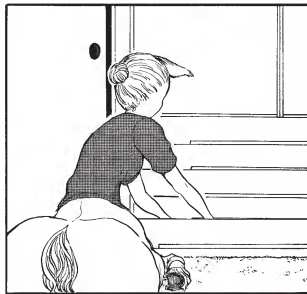


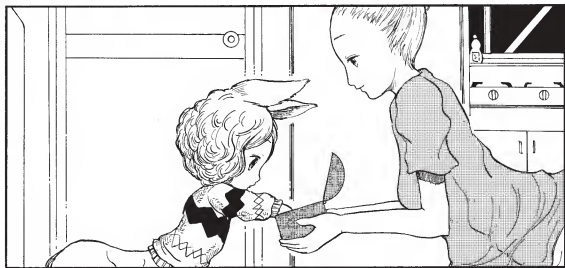
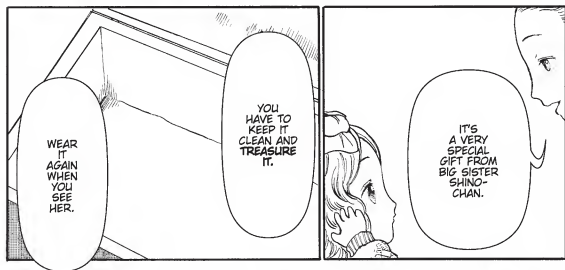
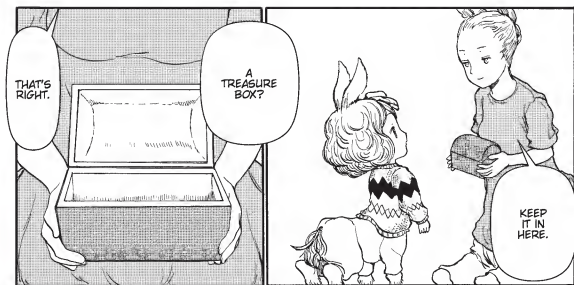


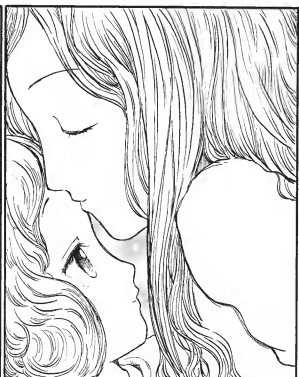
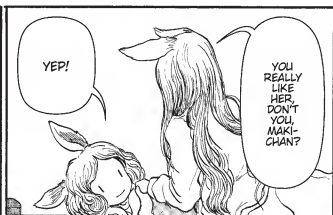
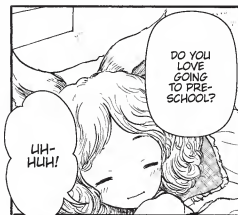
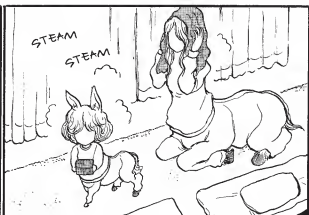


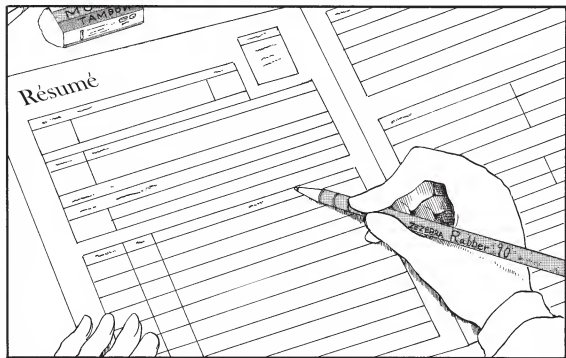
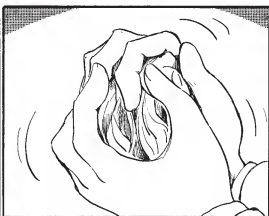
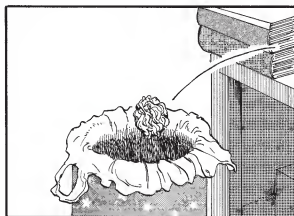
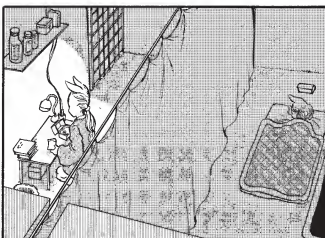
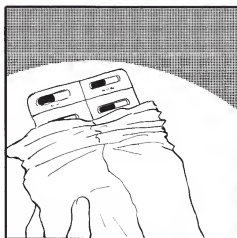


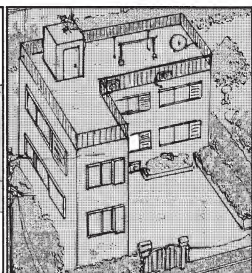
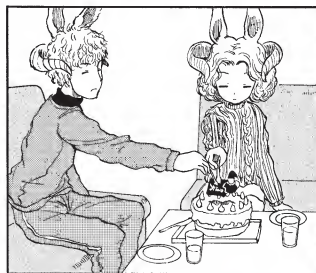
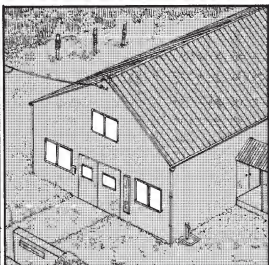
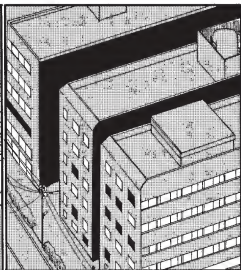
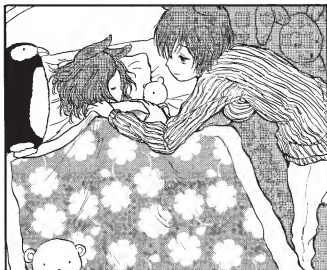


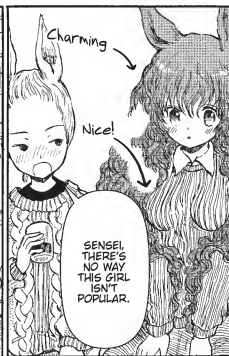
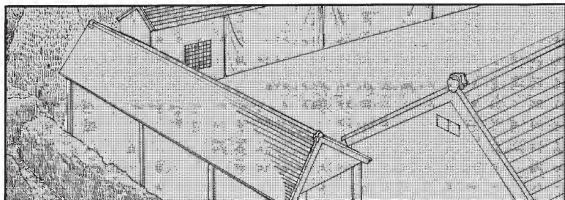












A CentaUr's Life

MESOZOIC CREATURES

DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: THE GIGANTIFICATION OF DINOSAURS

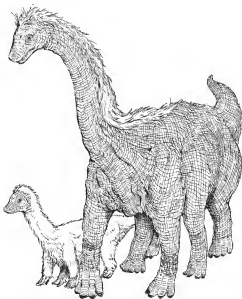
ONE REASON FOR DINOSAURS' POPULARITY, AND INDEED THEIR MOST EYE-CATCHING TRAIT, IS SURELY THEIR ENORMOUS SIZE. THE AVERAGE TYRANNOSAURUS WAS ESTIMATED AT THIRTEEN METERS TALL, WITH SAUROPODS SUCH AS THE SUPERSAURUS REACHING ANYWHERE FROM THIRTY TO SIXTY METERS TALL. OF COURSE THERE WERE ALSO SMALL DINOSAURS SUCH AS THE COMPSOGNATHUS, BUT EVEN THEY COULD REACH UP TO 70 CENTIMETERS AT FULL MATURITY, MAKING THEM FAIRLY LARGE CREATURES, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

AN ADVANTAGE OF THEIR LARGE SIZE IS THAT IT BECAME MORE DIFFICULT FOR OTHER SPECIES TO ATTACK THEM. YOU MAY ASK WHY, THEN, DON'T ALL SPECIES GROW LARGE? THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT DIFFERENT CREATURES HAVE DIFFERENT NICHES TO FILL, MEANING THAT THERE ARE ALSO MERITS TO BEING SMALL. FOR EXAMPLE, HAWKS AND LIONS DO NOT COMPETE FOR FOOD WITH SPARROWS AND MICE, MEANING THAT THESE SPECIES ARE NOT IN COMPETITION OVER THE SAME ECOLOGICAL NICHE. MEANWHILE, YOUNG ARE REARED AND NOURISHED BY FULL-GROWN ADULTS, MEANING THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO COMPETE WITH SMALLER SPECIES.

THAT SAID, IT IS THOUGHT THAT, AMONG DINOSAURS, THE YOUNG CARRIED OUT THE SAME LIFESTYLE AS THE FULLY GROWN. THIS MEANT THAT FOR DINOSAURS, BIGGER TRULY WAS BETTER. SMALLER SPECIES WOULD WIND UP COMPETING WITH THE YOUNG OF LARGER SPECIES OVER THE SAME ECOLOGICAL NICHE, ROBBING SMALLNESS OF ANY MERIT. MANY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHAT LED TO DINOSAURS GROWING IN SIZE AS AN OVERALL GROUP.

DIPLODOCUS

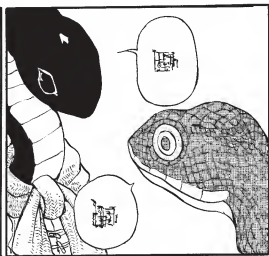
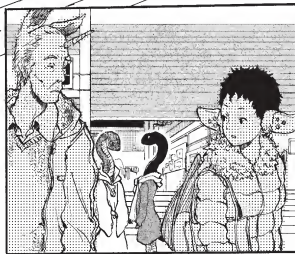
AN HERBIVOROUS SAUROPOD WHICH THRIVED DURING THE LATE JURASSIC PERIOD. THEY RANGED FROM TWENTY TO THIRTY-FIVE METERS IN LENGTH, WITH A LONG NECK AND TAIL. THEY PROBABLY USED THEIR PENCIL-LIKE TEETH TO PULL LEAVES FROM TREES AND SWALLOW THEM WHOLE, THEN USED GASTROLITHS (STOMACH STONES) TO BREAK THEM DOWN AND AID DIGESTION.

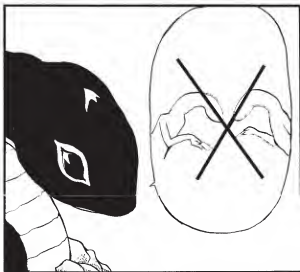




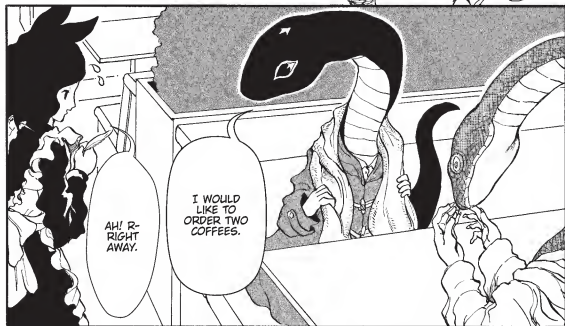
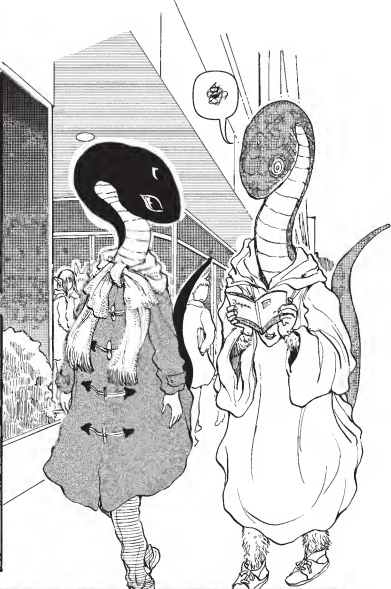


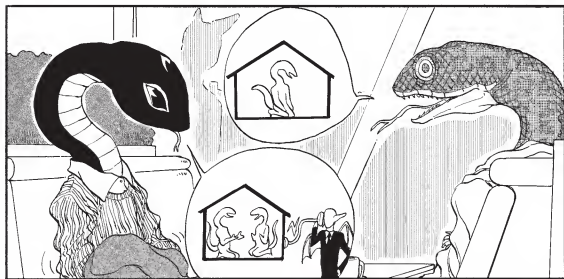
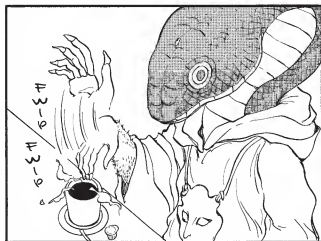
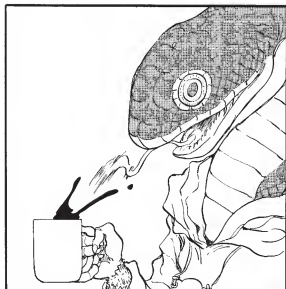
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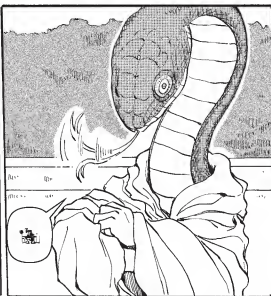
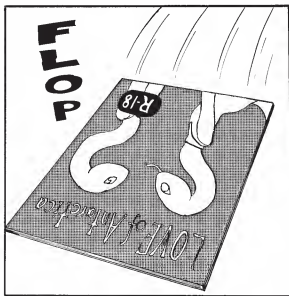
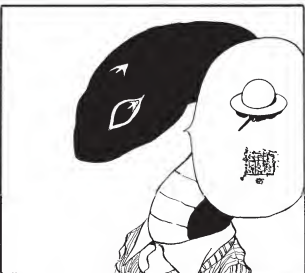
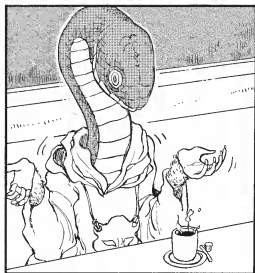




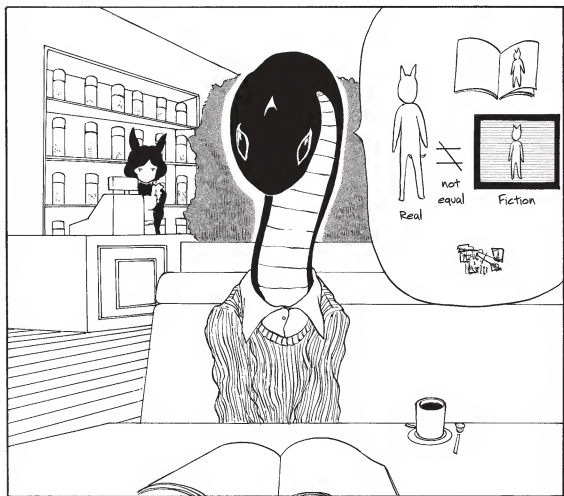
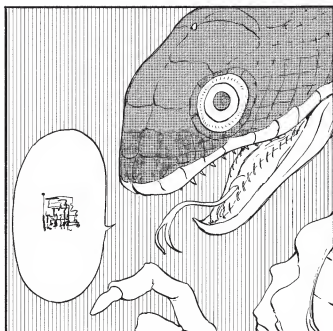
In Japan, business cards should be given with both hands.

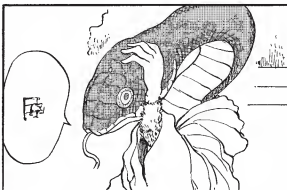
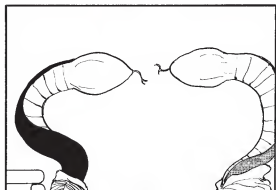
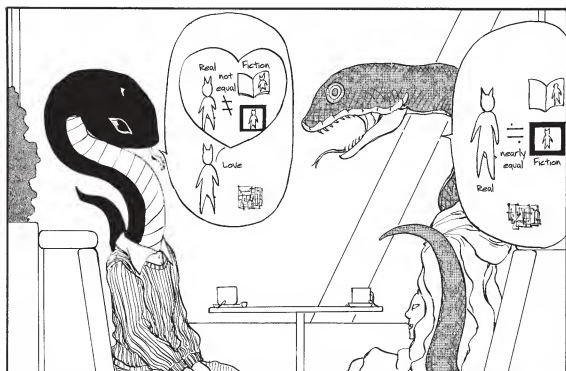


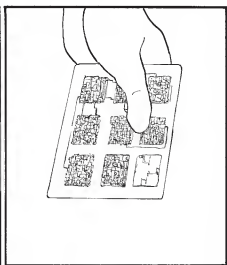
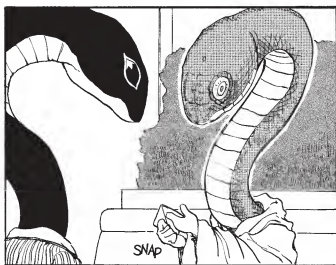
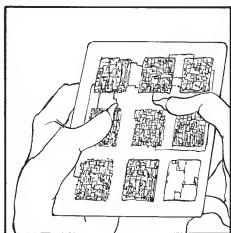
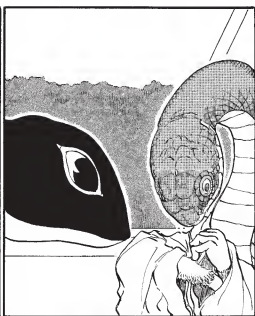
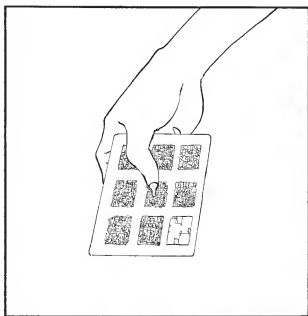


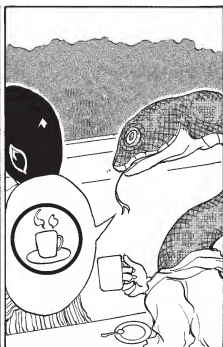














A CentaUr's Life

MESOZOIC CREATURES

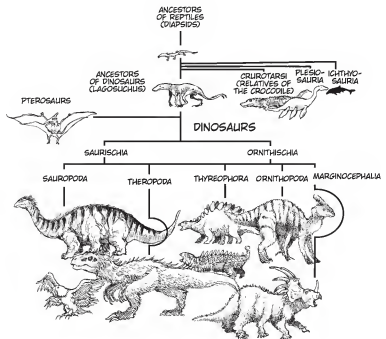
DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: DINOSAUR LINEAGE

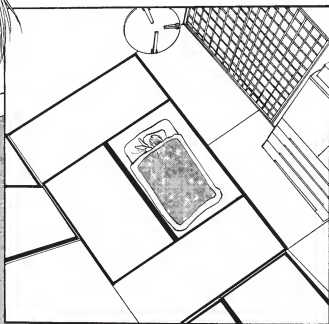
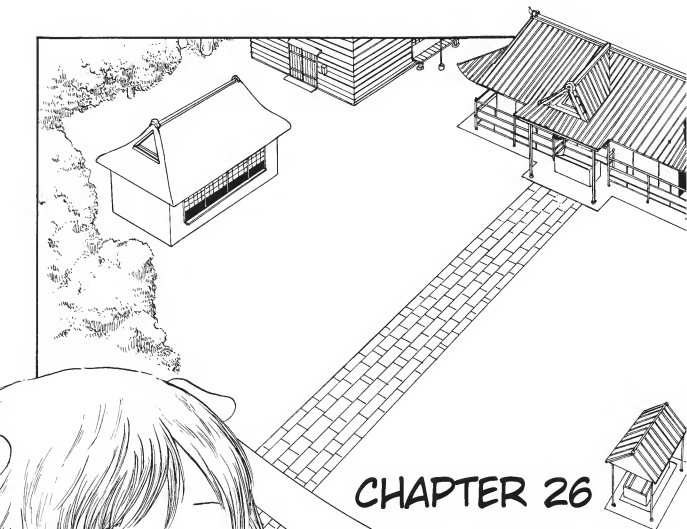
WE USE THE WORD "DINOSAUR" QUITE BROADLY TO REPRESENT A VAST VARIETY OF SPECIES, SPANNING SEVERAL SEPARATE LINEAGES. THERE ARE VARIOUS THEORIES ON HOW THOSE LINEAGES ARE DIVIDED, BUT HERE WE WILL BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THE MOSTLY COMMONLY ACCEPTED THEORY.

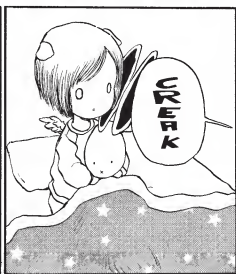
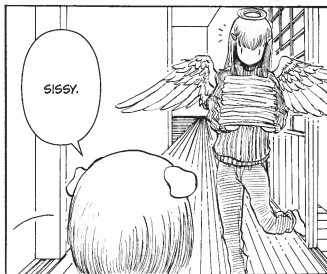
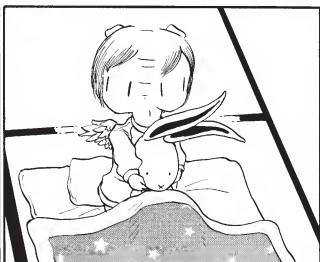
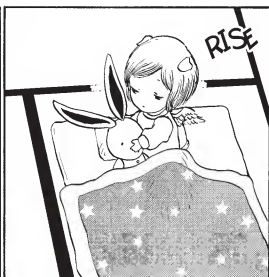
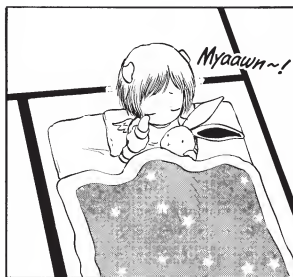
FIRST, DINOSAURS ARE WIDELY DIVIDED AMONGST TWO ORDERS: SAURISCHIA AND ORNITHISCHIA. IN GENERAL, THIS CLASSIFICATION IS DETERMINED BY THE DIRECTION OF THE PUBIC BONE ON THE PELVIS--IF IT POINTS FORWARD, THEY ARE SAURISCHIAN; IF IT POINTS BACKWARD, THEY ARE ORNITHISCHIAN.

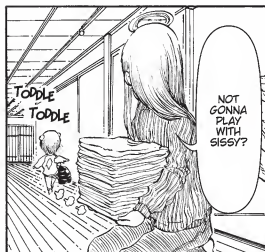
SAURISCHIAN ARE FURTHERMORE DIVIDED INTO THEROPODS SUCH AS THE TYRANNOSAURUS, ALLOSAURUS, AND VELOCIRAPTOR, AND SAUROPODS LIKE THE BRACHIOSAURUS, DIPLODOCUS, AND SUPERSAURUS.

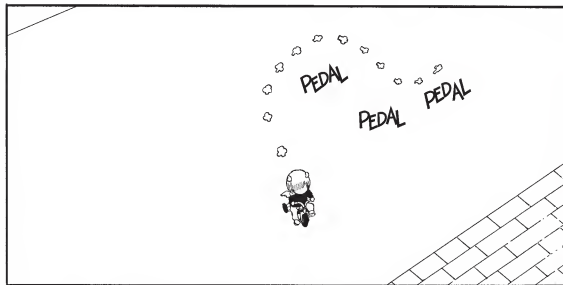
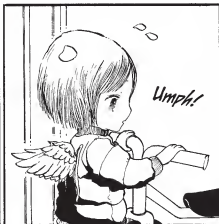
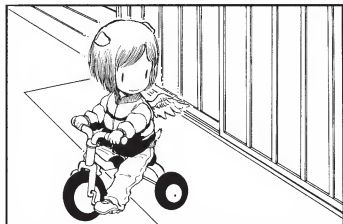
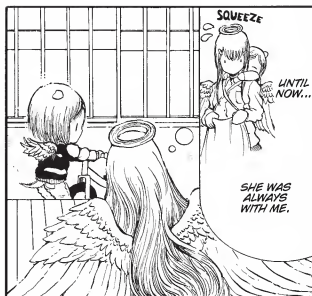
ORNITHISCHIAN, MEANWHILE, ARE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL GROUPS: THYREOPHORA LIKE THE STEGOSAURUS AND ANKYLOSAURUS, ORNITHOMYDIFORMS SUCH AS THE HADROSAUROLOPHUS (SO-CALLED "DUCK-BILLED DINOSAURS"), PACYCEPHALOSAURIDS SUCH AS THE PACYCEPHALOSAURUS (SO-CALLED "HEAD-BUTTING DINOSAURS"), AND MARGINOCEPHALIA, WHICH INCLUDED CERATOPSIDS LIKE THE TRICERATOPS AND STYRACOSAURUS.

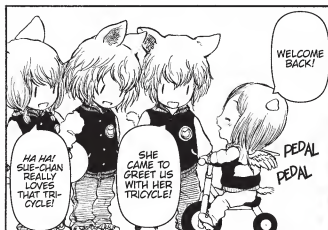
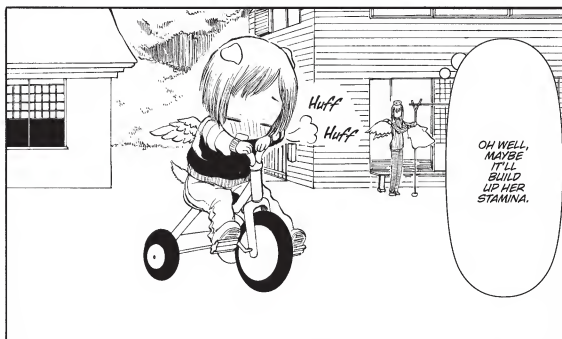
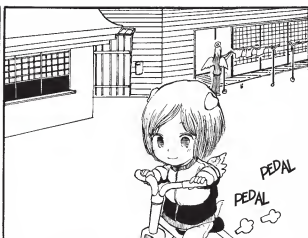


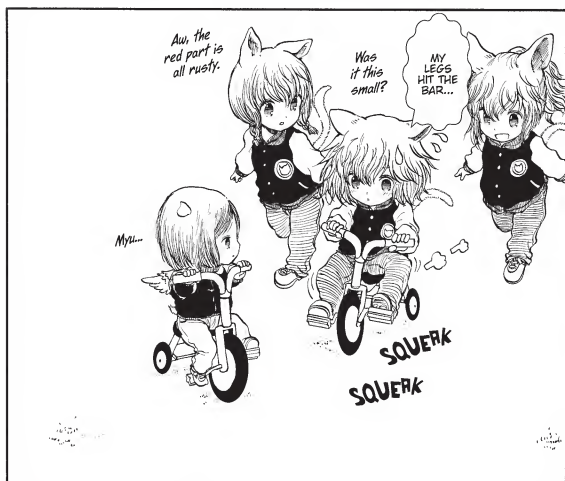




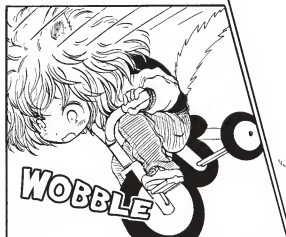
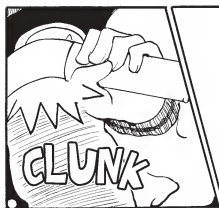




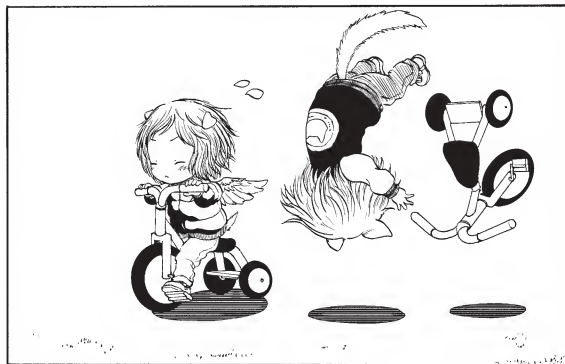


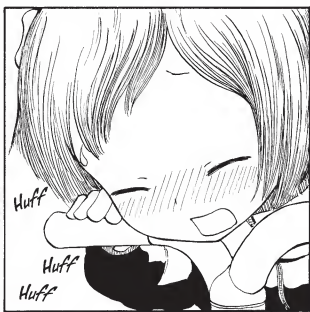
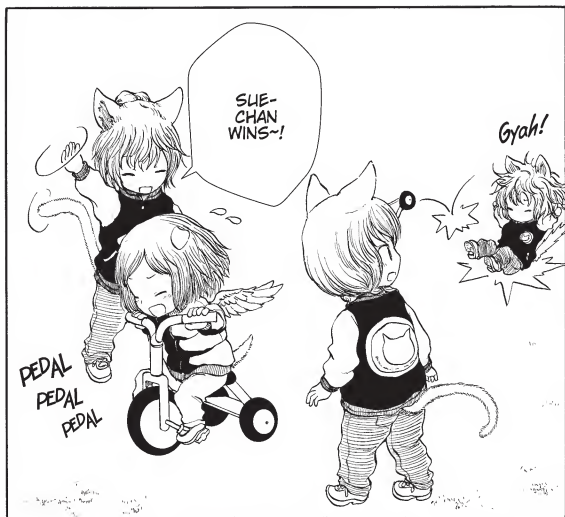




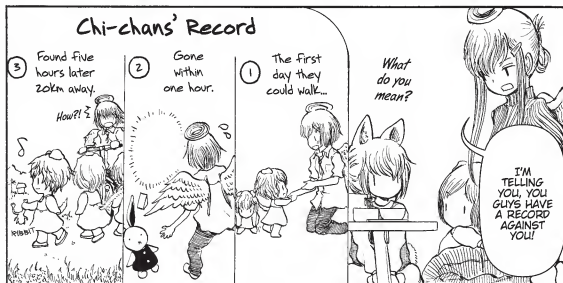


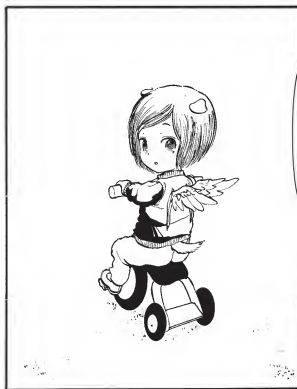
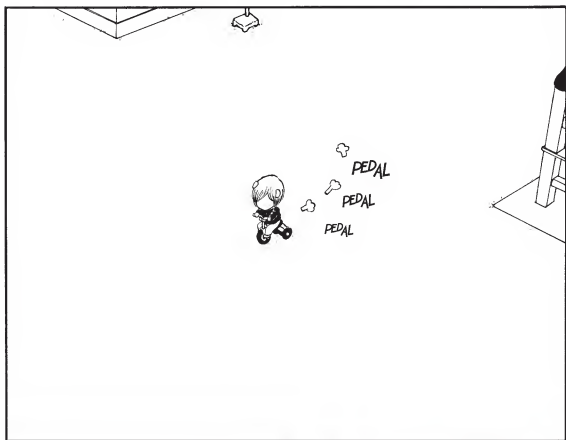
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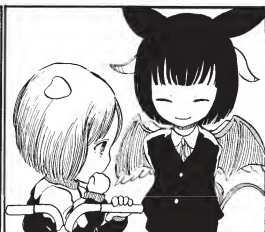
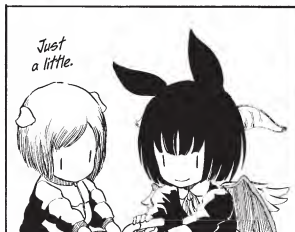
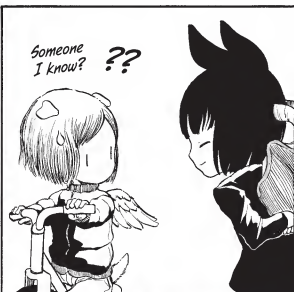
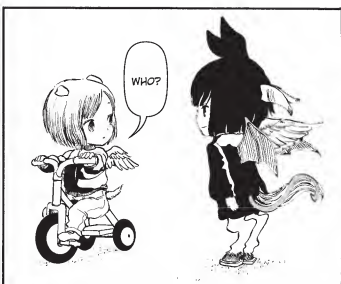


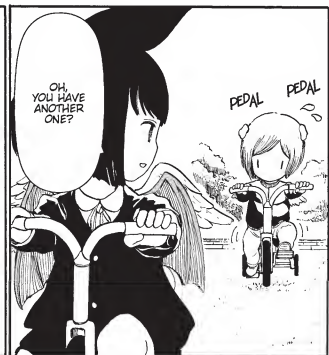
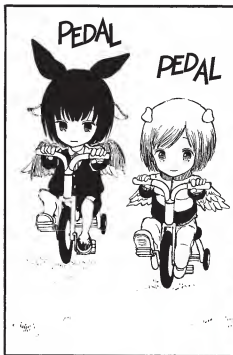
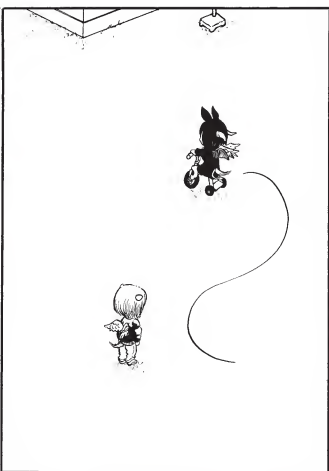
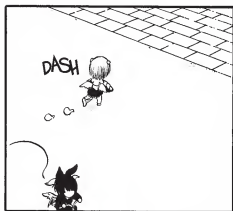
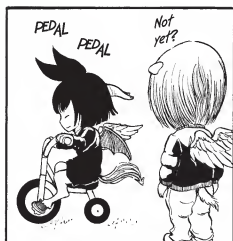


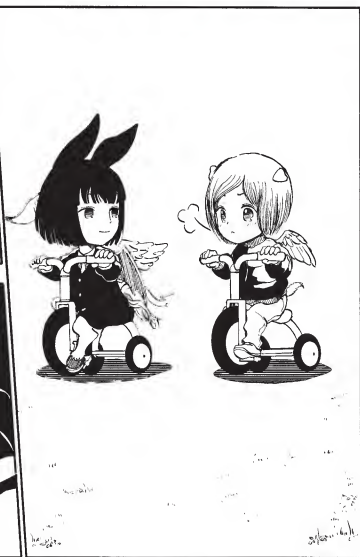


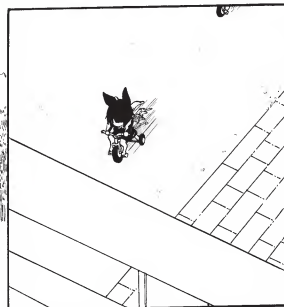
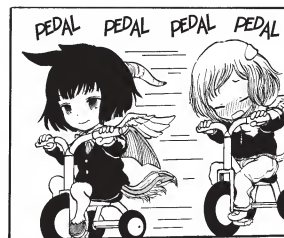


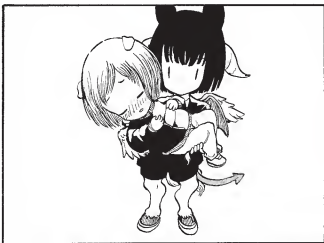
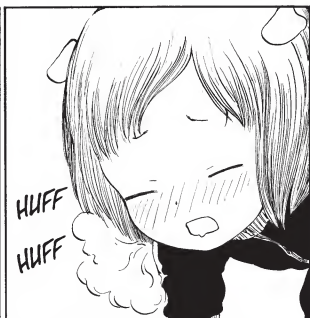


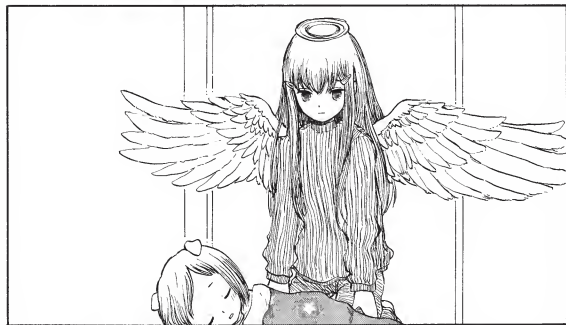
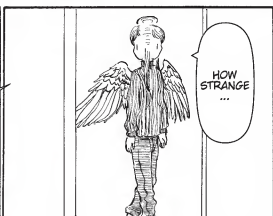
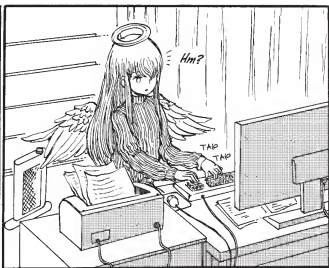


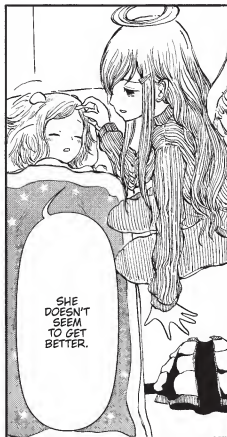












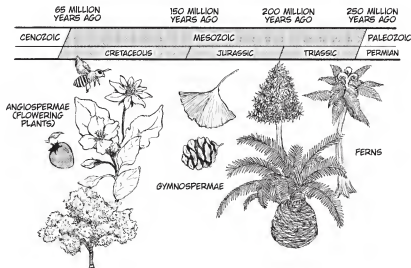
A CentaUr's Life

MESOZOIC CREATURES

DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: BACKDROP TO THE WORLD OF DINOSAURS

SO DISTRACTED ARE WE BY DINOSAURS THEMSELVES THAT WE RARELY TAKE THE TIME TO CONSIDER WHAT COMPRISED THEIR BACKDROP-- THAT IS, THE PLANT LIFE OF THE MESOZOIC ERA. IT SEEMS THAT LOW-BUDGET FILMS TEND TO SIMPLY USE MODERN-DAY PLANTS, WHILE POPULAR LITERATURE OFTEN CONTAINS ILLUSTRATIONS OF FERNS.

IF THERE'S ONE TYPE OF FLORA REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MESOZOIC, HOWEVER, IT'S GYMNOSPERM. GYMNOSPERM PLANTS--RELATIVES OF MODERN CONIFERS (NEEDLE-LEAFED TREES) SUCH AS CYCAS, PINES, AND CEDARS, AS WELL AS GINKGO TREES--HAD ALREADY MADE THEIR ENTRANCE BY THE MESOZOIC'S CARBONIFEROUS PERIOD. FERNS, WHICH PROPAGATE THROUGH THE RELEASE OF THIRSTY SPORES, STRUGGLED TO PROLIFERATE. GYMNOSPERM SEEDS, HOWEVER, REQUIRE FAR LESS MOISTURE, AND THUS WERE ABLE TO GAIN A FIRM FOOTHOLD. BY THE TRIASSIC AND INTO THE JURASSIC, FERNS HAD BEEN CORDONED OFF TO THE DAMP RECESSES OF SWAMPLANDS, WHILE GYMNOSPERM FORESTS GREW FAR AND WIDE.





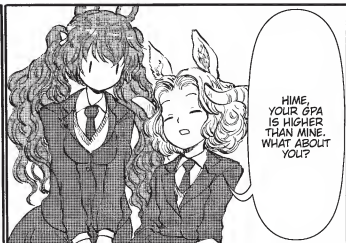
CHAPTER 27



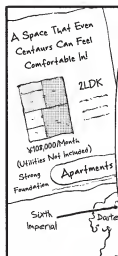




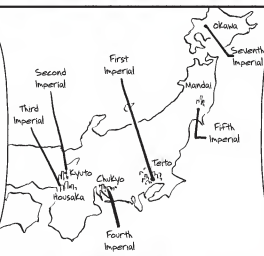
GETTING
IN IS
ONLY
PART
OF THE
PROBLEM
FOR ME.



HIME,
YOUR GPA
IS HIGHER
THAN MINE.
WHAT ABOUT
YOU?



BUT BIG
CITIES DON'T
HAVE MUCH
CENTAUR
HOUSING, AND
WHAT DOES
EXIST IS
EXPENSIVE.



THE GOOD
UNIVERSITIES
TEND TO BE
IN BIG CITIES.



Ggggh?!

AND
THERE ARE
TIMES
WE ARE
REFUSED
BECAUSE OF
OUR SIZE.

THERE
ARE
PLACES
WE
PHYSICALLY
CAN'T FIT.

THAT LAW
DOESN'T
APPLY TO
OLD
BUILDINGS,
THOUGH.

PUBLIC
FACILITIES
ARE
DIFFERENT,
BUT...



THE
EQUALITY
LAWS
SAY ALL
BUILDINGS
HAVE TO BE
ACCESSIBLE.



KANA
UNIVERSITY
IS AN
IMPERIAL
UNIVERSITY,
SO IT'S NOT
A BAD
CHOICE.

WELL,
IT'S NOT
LIKE YOU
HAVE TO
GO TO
COLLEGE.

MY
FATHER
SAYS I
SHOULD
JUST GO
TO KANA
UNIVERSITY
HERE.



IT'S HARD
TO GET A
JOB AFTER
GRADUATING
FROM A NEWLY
ESTABLISHED
SCHOOL,
THOUGH.

BUT
ACTUALLY,
THE MAIN
PROBLEM
IS I HAVE NO
CONFIDENCE OR
MOTIVATION
TO MOVE
UPWARDS.



NO
WAY! THAT
WAS A CALL
FOR SOLDIERS
TO JOIN A
FRONTLINE
ARMY.

IF YOU'RE
WORRIED
ABOUT A JOB,
WASN'T THAT
OLD MAN
FROM INTERNAL
AFFAIRS TRYING
TO RECRUIT
YOU?

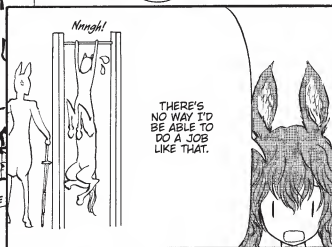


Internal
Affairs
Special
Task
Force



HIME,
DON'T GET
SUCKERED IN.
THOSE KINDS
OF JOBS ARE
ONLY COOL IN
BOOKS AND
MOVIES.

DON'T
WORRY.



Nnngh!

THERE'S
NO WAY I'D
BE ABLE TO
DO A JOB
LIKE THAT.



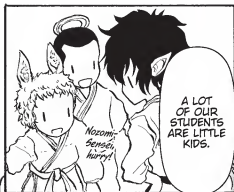
THERE'S
A LOT
TO THINK
ABOUT.



LIKE
I SAID,
IT'S NOT
FOR ME.

Well,
being a
regular
civil
servant
would
be kind
of nice.

IF YOU
REALLY
WANT TO
DO THAT,
TAKE THE
HIGHER
CIVIL
SERVICE
EXAM.



A LOT
OF OUR
STUDENTS
ARE LITTLE
KIDS.



THE
PROBLEM
IS WHERE
I WANT
TO GO.

WHAT
ABOUT YOU,
NOZOMI-CHAN?
YOU'LL GO TO
COLLEGE EVEN
IF YOU TAKE
OVER THE
DOJO, RIGHT?



OSU!

BUT ALL
THE OTHER
TEACHERS
LOOK SO
SCARY.

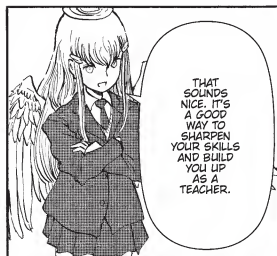


SO IF I
MOVE AWAY...
WELL, YOU GET
THE IDEA.



THEY'RE
NOT REALLY
GOOD
WITH KIDS.







FIRST
IMPERIAL,
AS EX-
PECTED?

WHAT
ARE YOU
GOING
TO DO,
CLASS
PRESI-
DENT?



BUT WE
MIGHT BE
ABLE TO
GO TO
THE SAME
UNIVERSITY.

AND I DON'T
REALLY
WANT
TO DO
SOMETHING
JUST
BECAUSE
SOMEONE
ELSE
RECOM-
MENDED
IT.



BECAUSE
OF MY
LITTLE
SISTERS.

WHEN I
GRADUATE,
MY LITTLE
SISTERS WON'T
EVEN BE TEN
YEARS OLD.

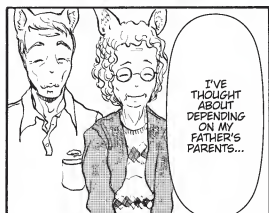
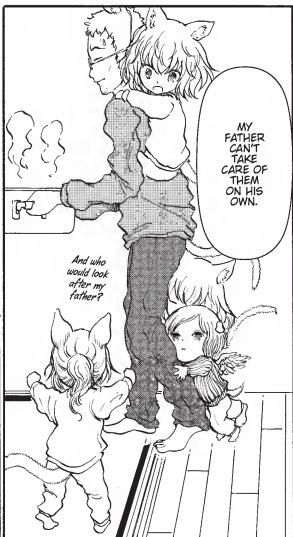


.....



I
DO.

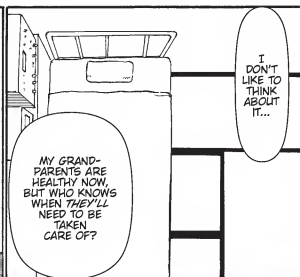
EVEN
THE CLASS
PRESIDENT
WORRIES
ABOUT
THIS.





EVERY-
THING
WOULD
FALL TO
PIECES.

IF THAT
HAPPENED,
I WOULD
BREAK
DOWN.

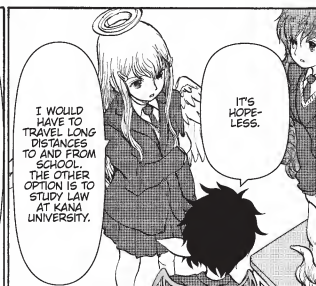


I
DON'T
LIKE TO
THINK
ABOUT
IT...

MY GRAND-
PARENTS ARE
HEALTHY NOW,
BUT WHO KNOWS
WHEN THEY'LL
NEED TO BE
TAKEN
CARE OF?



IF I TAKE
A LEAVE OF
ABSENCE,
I CAN
GRADUATE
WHEN THE
TRIPLETS
START
MIDDLE
SCHOOL.



I WOULD
HAVE TO
TRAVEL LONG
DISTANCES
TO AND FROM
SCHOOL.
THE OTHER
OPTION IS TO
STUDY LAW
AT KANA
UNIVERSITY.

IT'S
HOPE-
LESS.



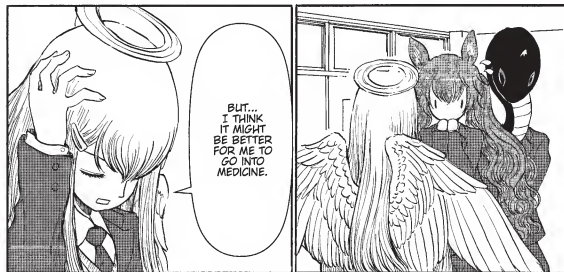
IT'S
DEFINITELY
THE MOST
PRESTIG-
IOUS.

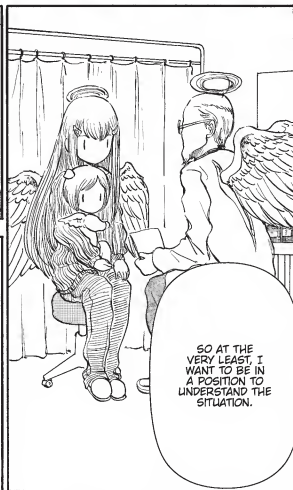
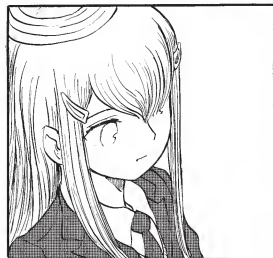
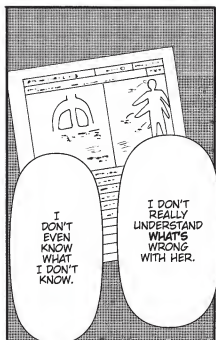
REGARD-
LESS OF
WHETHER
IT'S A
GOOD
SCHOOL....

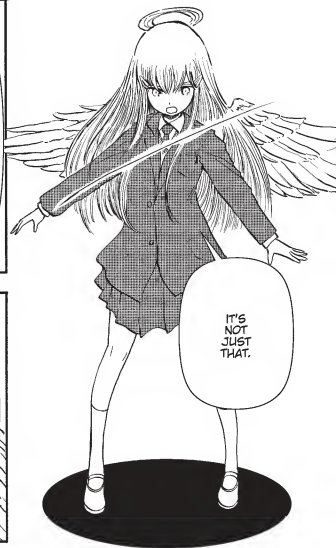
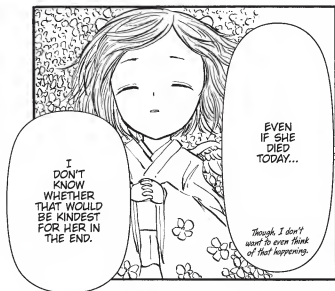


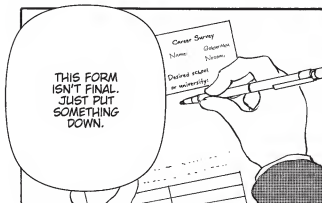
FIRST
IMPERIAL
SEEMS
REALLY
IMPORTANT
TO YOU.

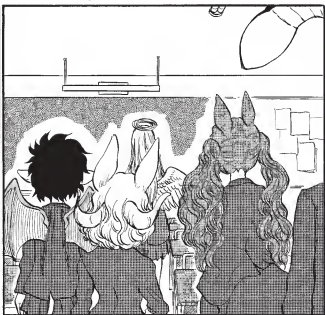
THEN, I'LL
GO TO
GRADUATE
SCHOOL
AT FIRST
IMPERIAL.

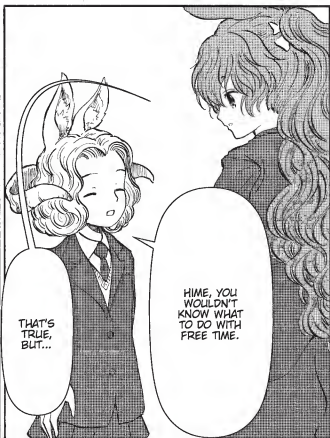












A CentaUr's Life

MESOZOIC CREATURES

DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: NON-DINOSAUR REPTILES OF THE MESOZOIC

OFTEN EXHIBITED ALONGSIDE AND MISTAKEN FOR DINOSAURS ARE PTEROSAURS, PLESIOSAURS, AND ICHTHYOSAURS. OF THE THREE, PTEROSAURS ARE PARTICULARLY CLOSE RELATIVES TO DINOSAURS, WITH WHOM THEY SHARE A COMMON ANCESTOR IN THE LAGOSUCHUS CREATURES OF THE TRIASSIC PERIOD. PLESIOSAURS, MEANWHILE, ARE CLOSER RELATED TO THE LIKES OF SCALY LIZARDS AND SNAKES (LEPIDOSAURIFORMS) THAN THEY ARE TO DINOSAURS (OR "ARCHOSAURS," WHICH ALSO INCLUDE CROCODILES AND TURTLES). ICHTHYOSAURS, THOUGH ALSO DIAPSID, ARE ONLY DISTANTLY RELATED TO BOTH LIZARDS AND DINOSAURS, HAVING BRANCHED OFF EARLIER THAN EITHER OF THE ABOVE.

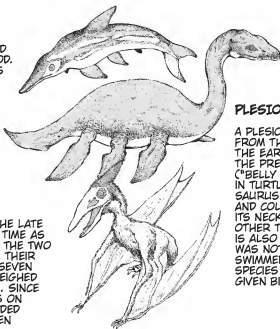
PTEROSAURS, SUCH AS THE WELL-KNOWN PTERANODON, WERE CREATURES CAPABLE OF POWERED FLIGHT, AND THEY DOMINATED THE SKIES DURING THE MESOZOIC AGE. HOWEVER, BY THE END OF THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD, JUST AS BIRD SPECIES WERE ALSO COMING TO MASTER POWERED FLIGHT, VIRTUALLY ALL PTEROSAURS HAD GROWN LARGE IN SIZE, AND THEY WERE ALMOST COMPLETELY WIPE OUT ALONGSIDE THE DINOSAURS.

PLESIOSAURS WERE WATER-DWELLING REPTILES, INCLUDING THE PLESIOSAURUS AND FUTABASAURUS. PLESIOSAURS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO MAIN GROUPS--PLESIOSAUROIDEA, WHICH HAD LONG NECKS AND SMALL HEADS; AND Pliosauroides, WHICH CONVERSELY HAD SHORT NECKS AND LARGE HEADS. BOTH HAD SIX FLIPPERS AND WERE PERFECTLY ADAPTED FOR THE LIFE AQUATIC. THE PLESIOSAURS WERE NEEDED WIPE OUT ALONGSIDE THE DINOSAURS.

ICHTHYOSAURS WERE AQUATIC REPTILES EVEN FURTHER ADAPTED FOR AQUATIC LIFE AND HIGHLY SIMILAR IN FORM TO DOLPHINS. THEY ALSO RESEMBLED DOLPHINS IN THAT THEY BORE LIVE YOUNG AND GAVE BIRTH UNDERWATER. HOWEVER, UNLIKE DOLPHINS, WHO UNDULATE UP AND DOWN TO PROPEL THEMSELVES, ICHTHYOSAURS MOVED LEFT AND RIGHT JUST LIKE FISH. THOUGH THEY THRIVED DURING THE JURASSIC PERIOD, THE ICHTHYOSAURS LOST THEIR POSITION AT THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN TO PLESIOSAURS IN THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD, AND WENT EXTINCT EVEN BEFORE DINOSAURS.

ICHTHYOSAURUS

AN ICHTHYOSAUR WHICH LIVED DURING THE JURASSIC PERIOD. APPROXIMATELY TWO METERS IN LENGTH.



PLESIOSAURUS

A PLESIOSAUR WHICH LIVED FROM THE LATE TRIASSIC TO THE EARLY JURASSIC. DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF GASTRALIA ("BELLY RIBS," ALSO FOUND IN TURTLES), THE PLESIOSAURUS LACKED FLEXIBILITY, AND COULD SCARCELY BEND ITS NECK IN ANY DIRECTION OTHER THAN DOWNWARD. IT IS ALSO BELIEVED THAT IT WAS NOT A VERY NIMBLE SWIMMER. THIS PARTICULAR SPECIES IS KNOWN TO HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO LIVE YOUNG.

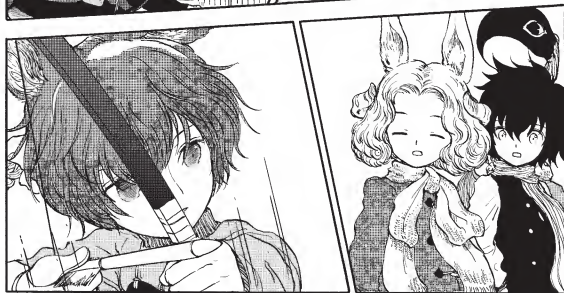
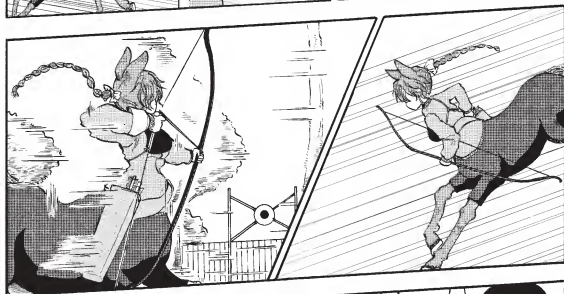
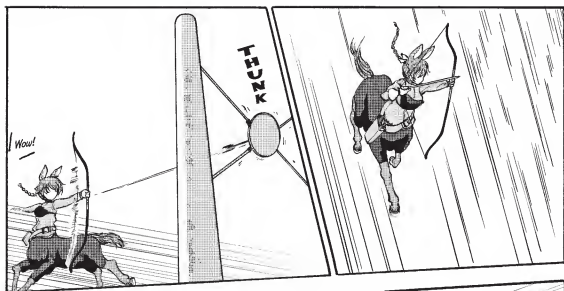
PTERANODON

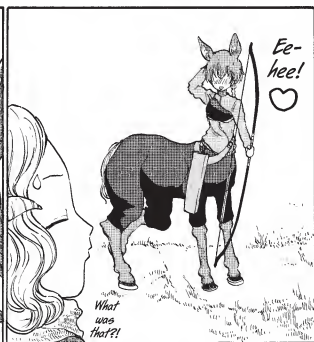
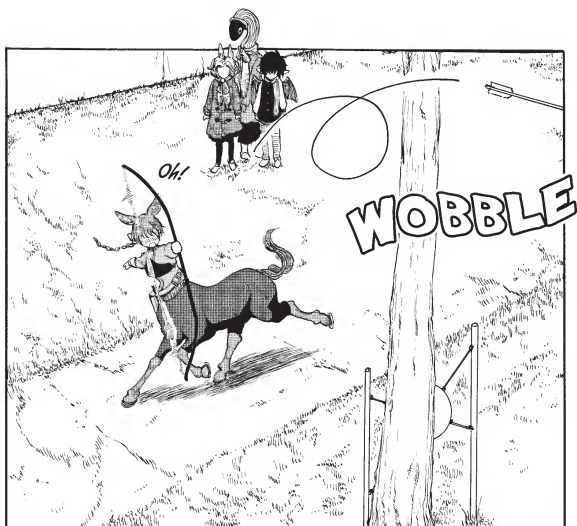
A PTEROSAUR WHICH LIVED DURING THE LATE CRETACEOUS (BUT NOT AT THE SAME TIME AS TYRANNOSAURUS; SCENES DEPICTING THE TWO TOGETHER ARE NONSENSICAL). WHILE THEIR WINGSPANS COULD REACH BETWEEN SEVEN AND NINE METERS, THEY TYPICALLY WEIGHED ONLY FIFTEEN TO TWENTY KILOGRAMS. SINCE THERE WERE RELATIVELY FEW PLACES ON THEIR BODY WHERE THE MUSCLE NEEDED FOR WING-FLAPPING COULD HAVE BEEN ATTACHED, IT IS THOUGHT THAT THEY MOSTLY RELIED ON GLIDING.

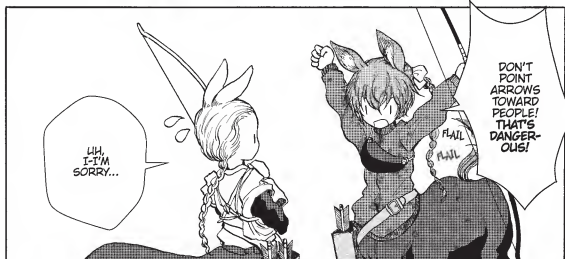
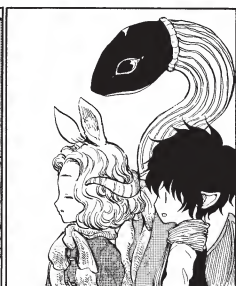
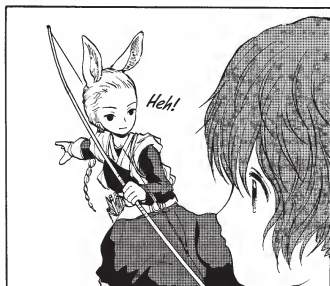
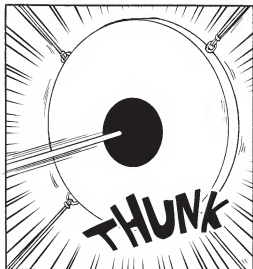


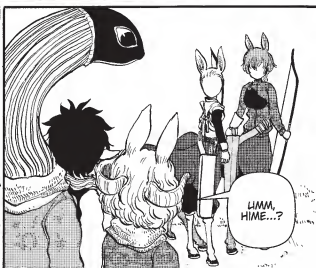
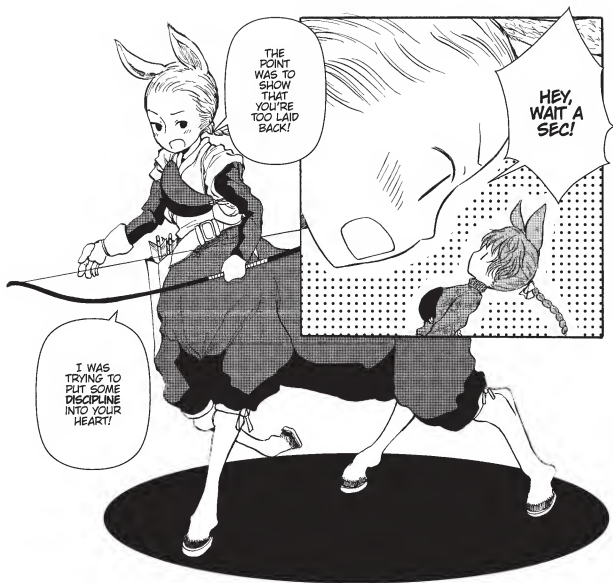
RUMMBLE

CHAPTER 28



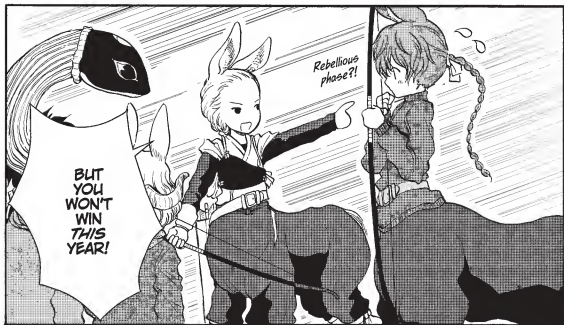
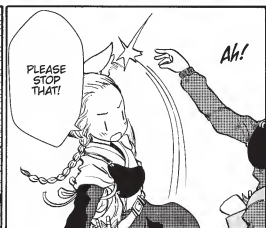
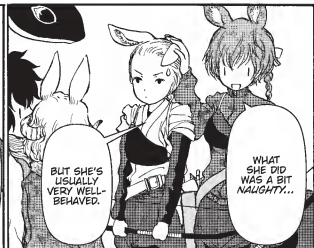


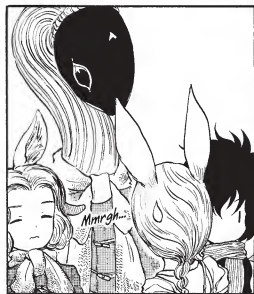
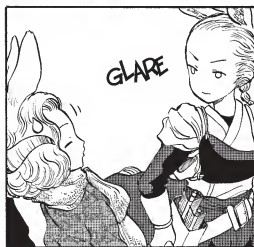


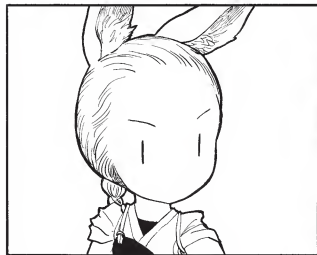
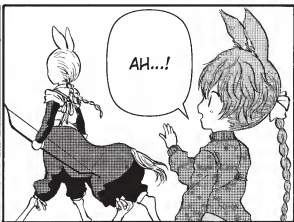
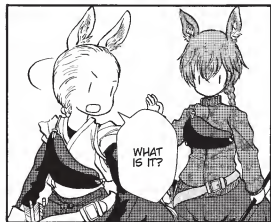
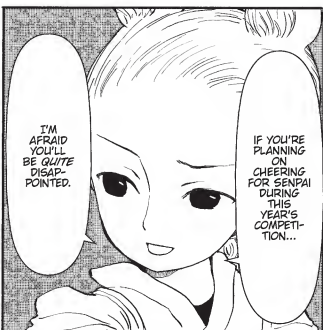
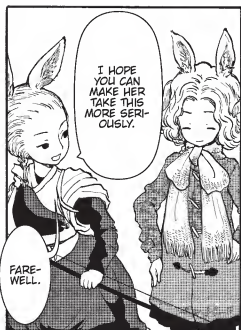


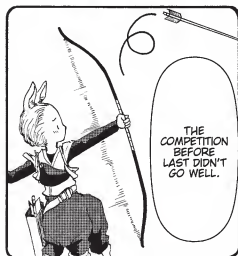
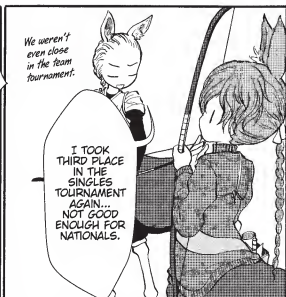
*Mounted archery.

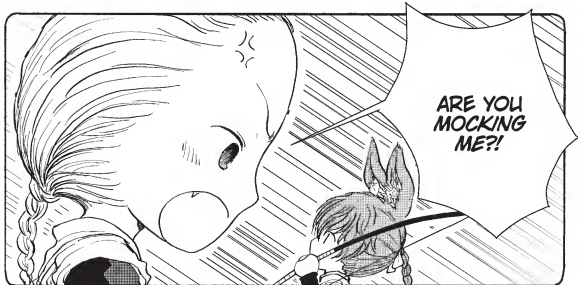
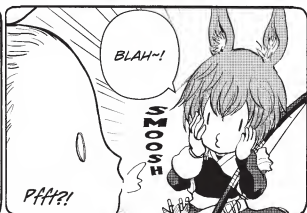
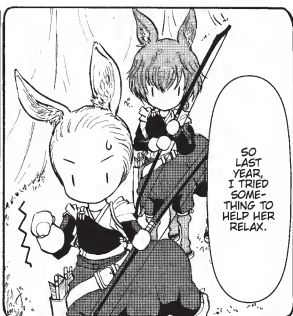
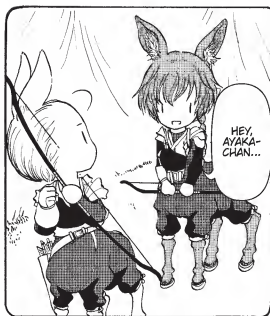
**The Japanese martial art of archery.

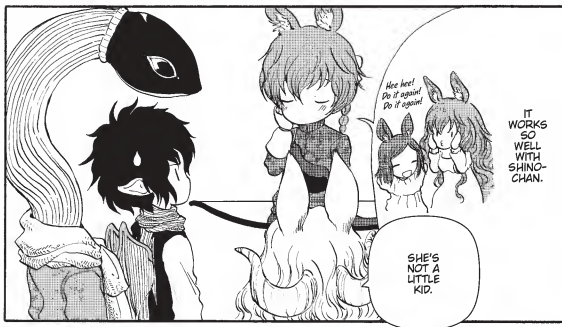
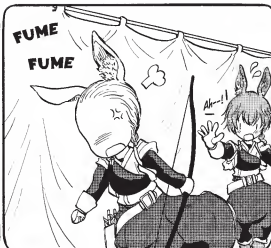
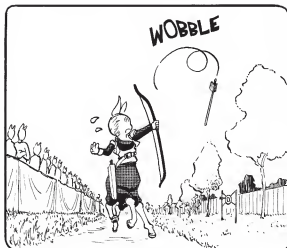


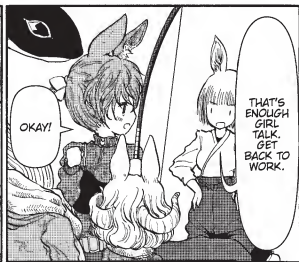














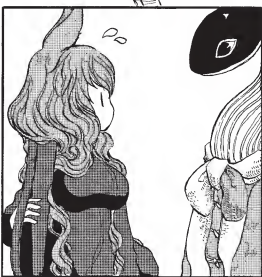
USING A BOW IS A LOT HARDER THAN IT LOOKS.

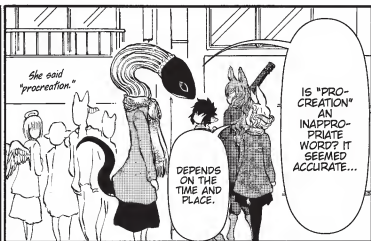
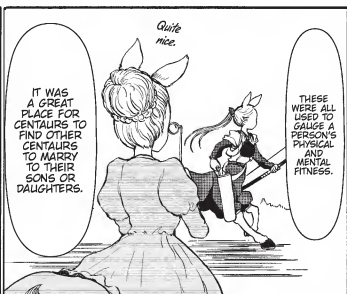
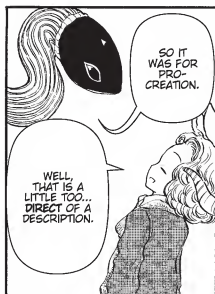
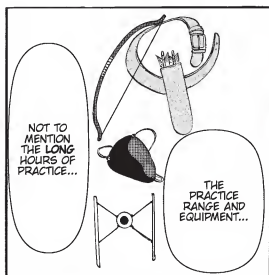


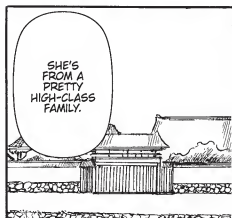
BY THE WAY, WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PICK UP ARCHERY, HIME-CHAN?

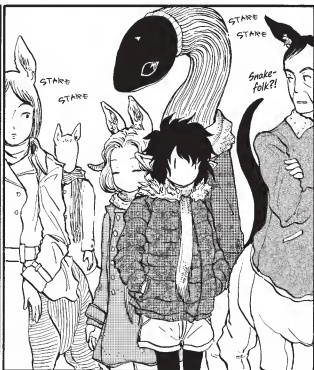
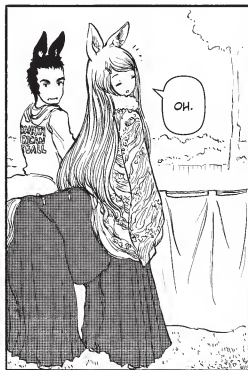
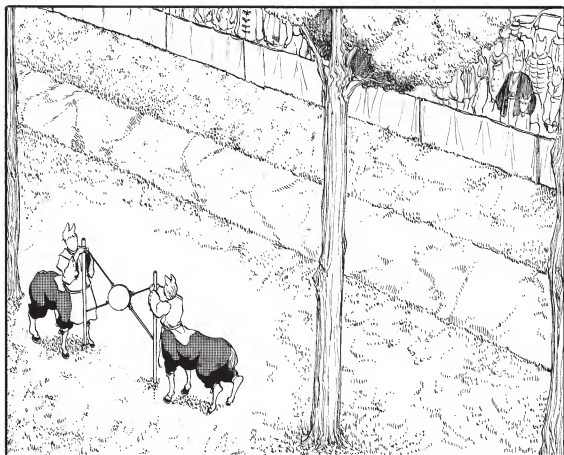


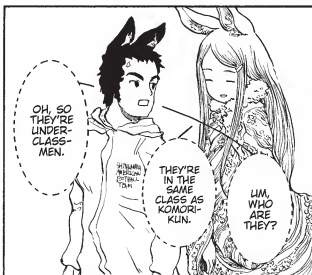
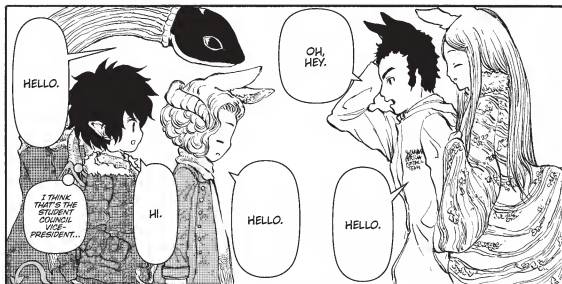
MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO DO IT.





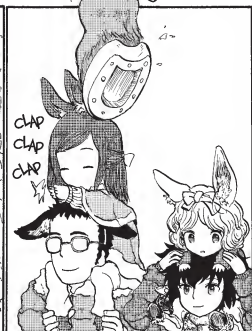
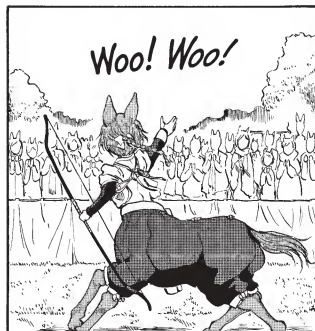
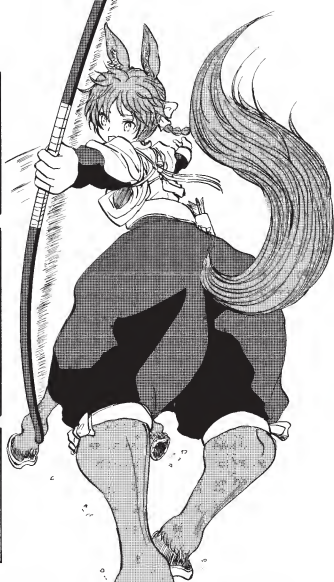
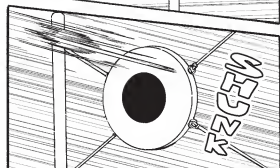
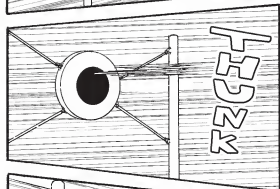
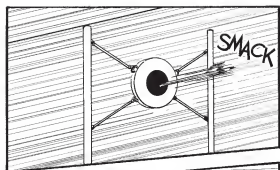


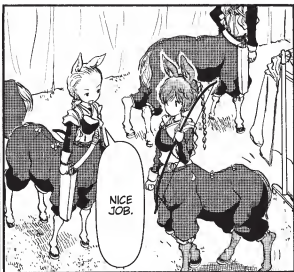


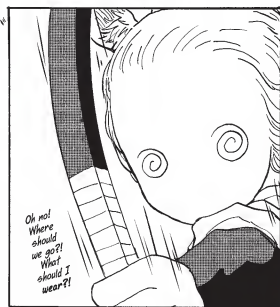
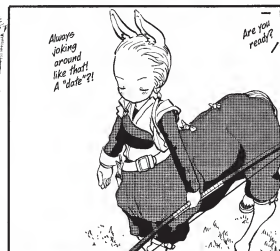


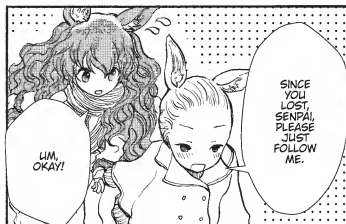
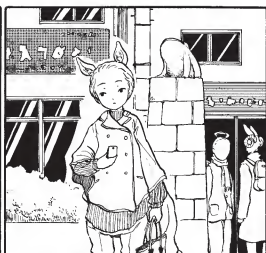












A CentaUr's Life

MESOZOIC CREATURES

DINOSAURS AND THEIR CLOSE RELATIVES: IF DINOSAURS HADN'T GONE EXTINCT

IF DINOSAURS HADN'T GONE EXTINCT, WOULD MAMMALS EVER HAVE GONE ON TO PROSPER? THIS IS A TRICKY QUESTION. WHILE THE FOUR-SEASON CYCLE DID FIRST EMERGE DURING THE CRETACEOUS PERIOD, THE EARTH'S TEMPERATURE WAS STILL VERY HOT THROUGHOUT THE MESOZOIC ERA, PROVIDING A CLIMATE FOR WHICH THE DINOSAURS WERE VERY WELL SUITED.

HOWEVER, THE EARTH IS A GREAT DEAL COOLER THAN IT WAS THEN, AND IT'S BEEN VISITED BY A NUMBER OF ICE AGES IN THE MEANTIME. IT'S LIKELY THEY WOULD HAVE GONE EXTINCT ANYWAY, UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE EARTH'S COOLING CLIMATE, OR ELSE VASTLY DECREASED IN NUMBER, ALLOWING MAMMALS TO FLOURISH. ALTERNATIVELY, THEY MIGHT HAVE ADAPTED TO THE COLD TEMPERATURES, THEREBY KEEPING MAMMALS SHOVED OFF INTO AN ECOLOGICAL NICHE FOR SMALL CREATURES. ONE CAN ALSO IMAGINE THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE EVOLVED INTO INTELLECTUAL LIFE FORMS A LA THE SNAKEFOLK AND MERFOLK AND COME TO COEXIST WITH HUMANKIND.

LET'S IMAGINE NOW WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE IF DINOSAURS HAD INDEED EVOLVED LIKE HUMANS RATHER THAN GOING EXTINCT.

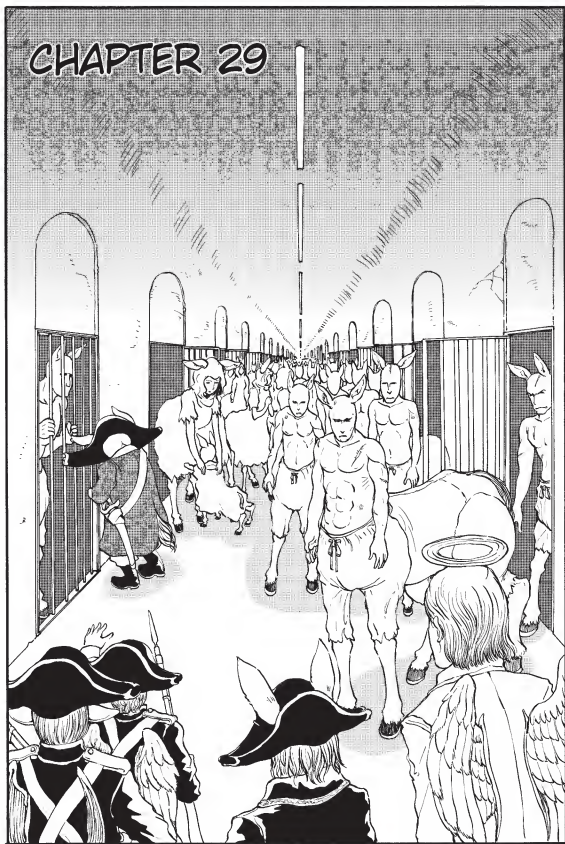
DINOSAURFOLK

A WIDELY POPULAR MODEL USED BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF THE ANTARCTICAN SNAKEFOLK. IT SHOWS THE THEORY THAT, JUST AS THE REPTILIAN ICHTHYOSAURS HAD EVOLVED TO RESEMBLE FISH SPECIES AND DOLPHINS, SO TOO COULD SPECIES HAVE COME TO RESEMBLE HUMAN BEINGS IF THEY WERE TO EVOLVE IN SIMILAR WAYS. NOTABLY, THIS MODEL, DEPICTING THE FIGURE OF A YOUNG, FOUR-ARMED GIRL, IS THE ONLY ONE ON DISPLAY AT THE SHIMODA JAPAN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM. WHILE A BROADER VARIETY OF FIGURES--MALE AND FEMALE, YOUNG AND OLD--HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PLANNED, A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION RESULTED IN THE PROJECT'S FUNDING BEING PULLED. ONLY THIS FIGURE, WHICH WAS ALREADY IN PRODUCTION, WAS SEEN TO COMPLETION--ALBEIT AT THE PROJECT SUPERVISOR'S OWN PERSONAL EXPENSE.

FURTHERMORE, THE FIGURE WAS ORIGINALLY DISPLAYED IN THE NUDE, BUT DUE TO THE REGRETTABLE HUMAN INABILITY TO MAINTAIN SCHOLARLY COMPOSURE, THE PROJECT SUPERVISOR AND CREATOR DECIDED TO ADORN IT WITH CLOTHES FROM HIS HOME. DUE TO THESE EVENTS, THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED ALLEGATIONS ON THE NET THAT THE CREATOR PROJECTED HIS OWN PERSONAL TASTES ONTO THE MODEL, BUT THESE CLAIMS ARE COMPLETELY GROUNDLESS.

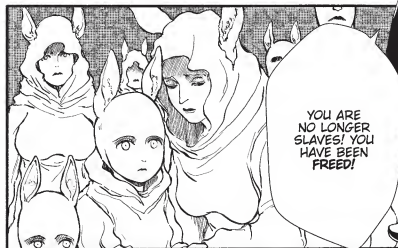


CHAPTER 29





CENTAURS!

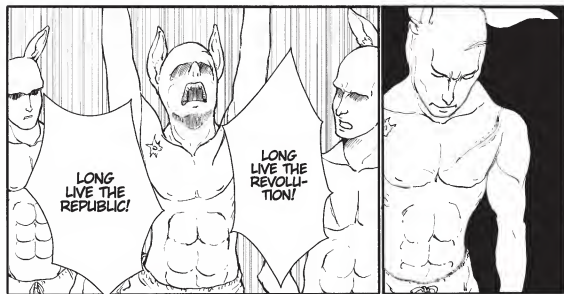


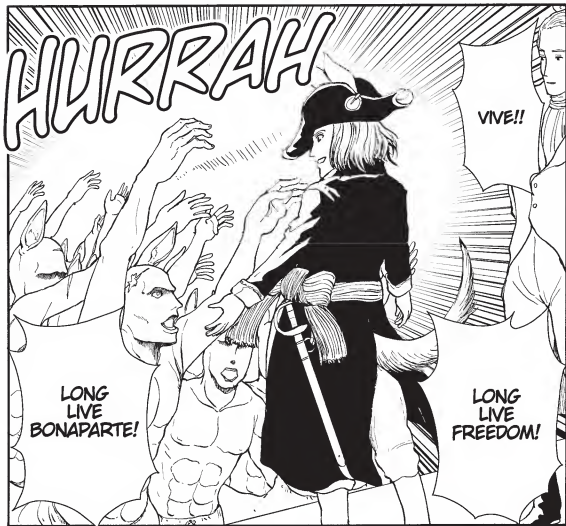
**YOU ARE
NO LONGER
SLAVES! YOU
HAVE BEEN
FREED!**

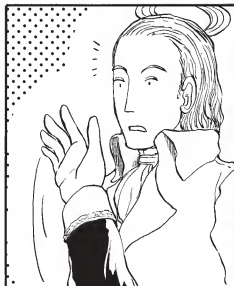


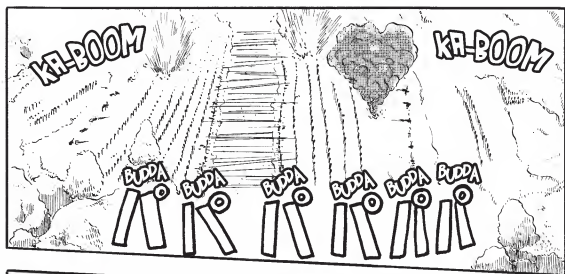
**YOU ARE
HEREBY FREE
AND EQUAL
CITIZENS
OF THIS
REPUBLIC!**

**I
DECLARE,
IN THE NAME
OF CONSUL
BONAPARTE
AND THE NEW
ORDER:**











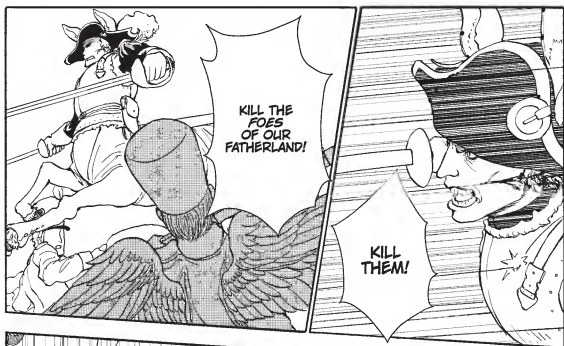


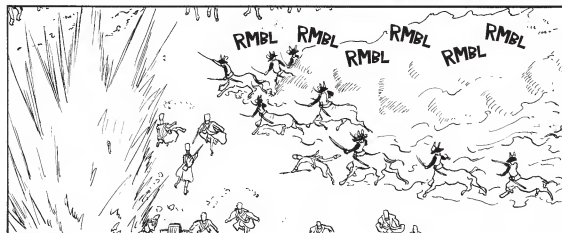
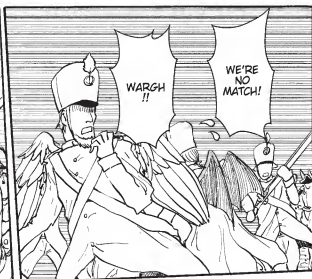
IT NOW
STANDS TO
BE TRAMPED
DOWN BY
THE VERY
MONARCHS,
NOBLES, AND
KNAVES
WHO ONCE
OPPRESSED
YOU!

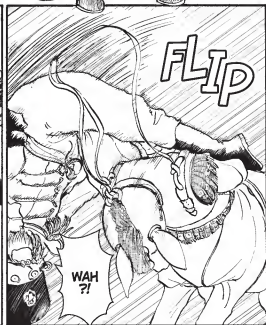
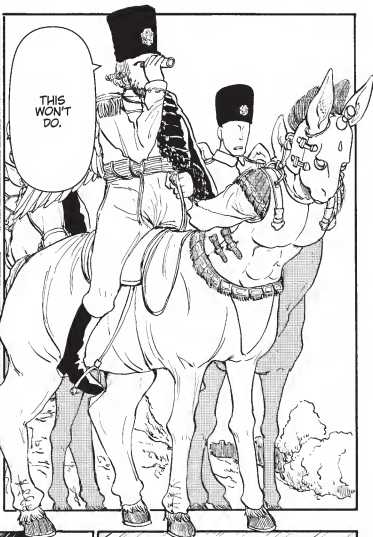
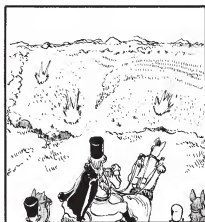


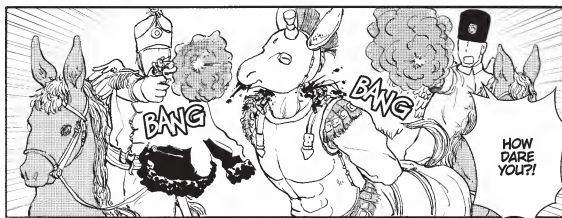
FIGHT!
TO PROTECT
YOUR
LIBERTY
AND
EQUALITY!

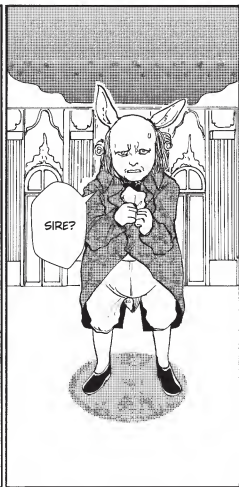
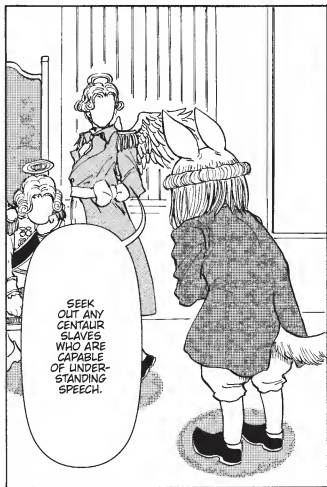


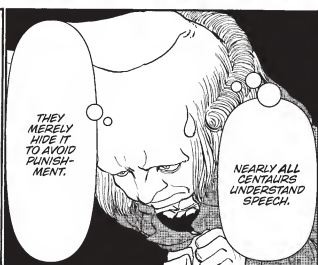


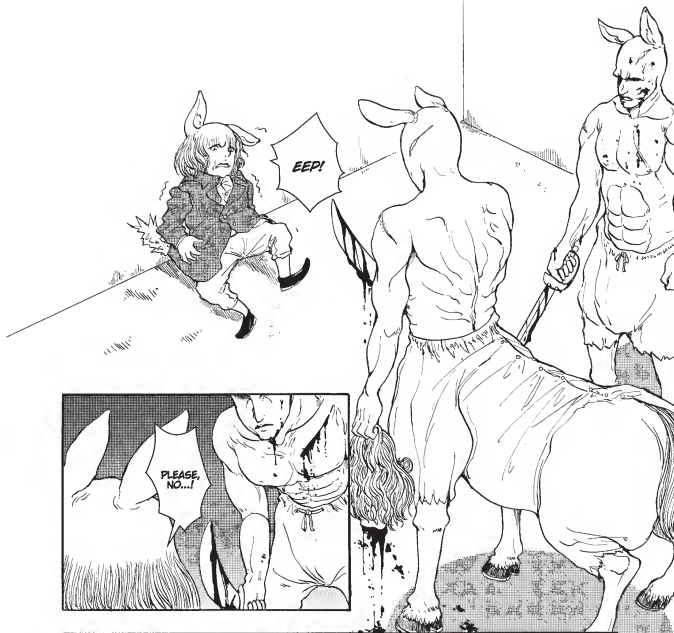


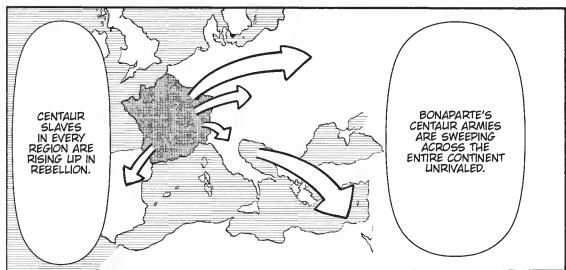
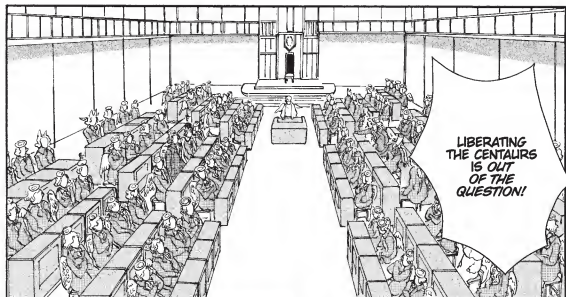






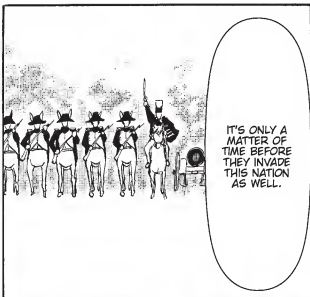








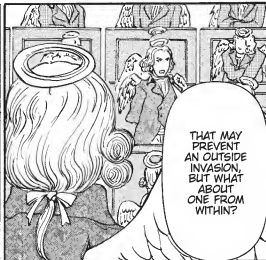
WE HAVE
DOMINANT
FLEETS AND
BRILLIANT
ADMIRALS
ON OUR
SIDE!



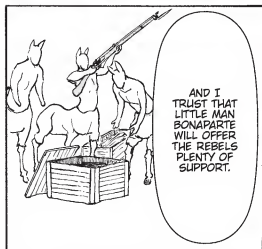
IT'S ONLY A
MATTER OF
TIME BEFORE
THEY INVADE
THIS NATION
AS WELL.



WE'LL
SIMPLY
SLAUGHTER
ALL
CENTAURS
IN THE
NATION!



THAT MAY
PREVENT
AN OUTSIDE
INVASION,
BUT WHAT
ABOUT
ONE FROM
WITHIN?

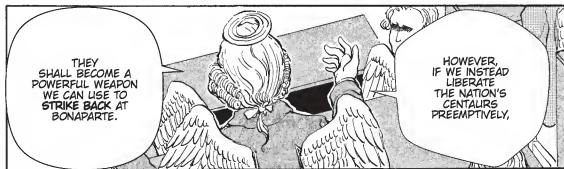
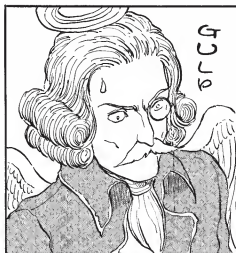


AND I
TRUST THAT
LITTLE MAN
BONAPARTE
WILL OFFER
THE REBELS
PLENTY OF
SUPPORT.



THAT
WOULD
MERELY
FORCE
THEM TO
REVOLT.

UTTER
FOOLISHNESS.



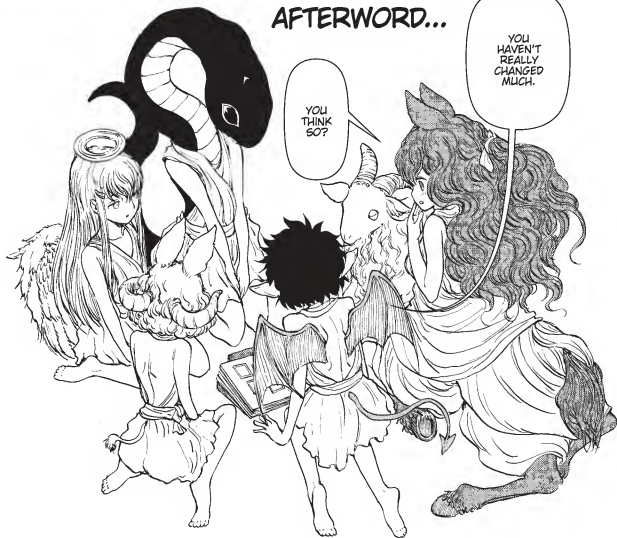


A CentaUr's Life



THIS IS
YOU WHEN
YOU WERE
LITTLE?

AFTERWORD...



YOU
THINK
SO?

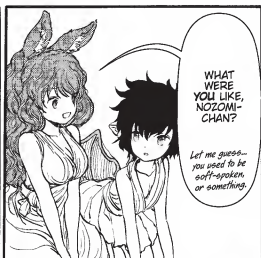
YOU
HAVEN'T
REALLY
CHANGED
MUCH.



SHE'S
EXACTLY
THE
SAME.

NAH,
SHE'S
ALWAYS
BEEN
LIKE
SHE IS
NOW.

SHUT
UP!



WHAT
WERE
YOU LIKE,
NOZOMI-
CHAN?

Let me guess—
you used to be
soft-spoken,
or something.



ALL I
HAVE TO
GO BY ARE
WRITTEN
SYMBOLS.



WHAT
ABOUT
KYO-
CHAN?

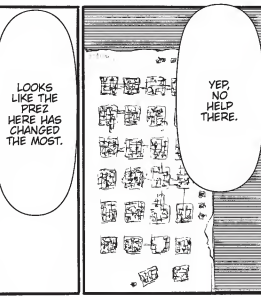
SHE'S NO
DIFFERENT,
EITHER.



You were
identical to
Sue-chan.

WH-
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN...?

IT'S
LIKE...
MAN,
YOU'VE
BEEN
THROUGH
A LOT.



YEP,
NO
HELP
THERE.

LOOKS
LIKE THE
PREZ
HERE HAS
CHANGED
THE MOST.

THE GROWTH OF KANATA THROUGH INDUSTRY AND WATER TRANSPORTATION

During the Kamikura and Muromachi eras, the Oda family made Oda castle (the Oda district in modern Kanata City) the seat of government power. Oda castle was built on tableland between Mount Houkyou* and the wetlands nearby that have become rice fields in modern times. This location was not considered militarily strategic, unlike the locations of other castles. So why would the Oda family, governors of the Hidachi prefecture, choose such a place?

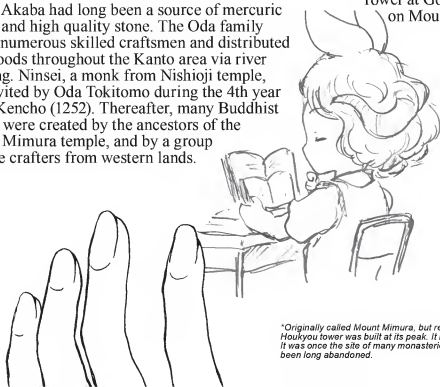
The answer is that the castle was adjacent to the Sanzuse River (also known as the Ake River). This river not only opened to a large inland sea, called the Katori Sea, but to the rest of the nation for water transport and shipping. The Katori Sea runs between what is currently Kasumigaura and Teganuma/Inbanuma, connecting them together. It serves as a junction for several smaller rivers--for instance, you can reach the bay of the Imperial City through the old Tonegawa water system.

During these eras, centaurs were still used as the primary form of transportation. River traffic, however, allowed for the movement of troops and supplies in greater volumes, thus cementing its place as a lifeline for the leaders of the time.

Mount Akaba had long been a source of mercuric sulfide and high quality stone. The Oda family hosted numerous skilled craftsmen and distributed their goods throughout the Kanto area via river shipping. Ninsei, a monk from Nishioji temple, was invited by Oda Tokitomo during the 4th year of the Kencho (1252). Thereafter, many Buddhist statues were created by the ancestors of the nearby Mimura temple, and by a group of stone crafters from western lands.



Remains of a Five Ringed
Tower at Gokuraku Temple
on Mount Houkyou



*Originally called Mount Mimura, but renamed Mount Houkyou after the Houkyou tower was built at its peak. It is also locally called Mount Oda. It was once the site of many monasteries and convents, but most have been long abandoned.

THE CONFLICT AND TENSION BETWEEN THE HOUJOU FAMILY'S INFLUENCE AND HIDACHI'S GOVERNOR

After the death of En no Yoritomo and the establishment of the Kamikura shogunate, Yada no Tomoie (ancestor of the Oda family--his son Tomoshige changed the family name back to Oda) was one of the thirteen council members that assisted the second generation shogun, Yoriie, to govern the shogunate.

The governorship of Hidachi had been passed down within the Oda family for generations, but the Houjou family received that power after the shogun line of the En family ended in just three generations. During the Rebellion of Shokyu between the Kamikura shogunate and the Emperor Gouba, the Houjou family not only survived the Mongol attack, but eliminated powerful families of the shogunate, such as Miura and Adachi Yasumori, gaining power that even affected Hidachi. Thus, during the first year of Bunpo (1317), the governor's seat was given not to a member of the Oda family, but to Sasuke no Tokitsuna, a member of the Houjou family.

Here, we will explain a little of the Kamikura shogunate. It is often misunderstood, but the establishment of the Kamikura shogunate did not mean that the preexisting government and aristocracy were destroyed in a single night. The provincial governors and Kokuga** of various provinces coexisted for quite some time. The Kamikura Bakufu held two important administrative duties. First of all, it could appoint *Jito*, or lords, responsible for operating the manors peppered across the land. Secondly, it presided over the governors in each state responsible for oversight of the military, police, and the aforementioned regional *Jito*. Their authority initially only extended to vassals (military retainers to the Bakufu) in the eastern region. At first, the Bakufu's influence was limited only to governance of the samurai in the east. However, as a result of the Bakufu's victory in the Jokyuu Rebellion, their advantage over the imperial court became solidified, and their influence spread westward as they commanded a defense against the Mongols. Meanwhile, the *Jito* and governors began exercising their newfound authority to seize manors, Kokuga land, and power.

Toward the end of the Kamikura period, the Houjou family began to occupy a greater and greater percentage of the nation's governor posts. This monopolization of power aroused unrest from other vassals, ultimately leading to the downfall of the Houjou, and indeed, the end of the Kamikura Bakufu.

**In the case of *Jito*, they would intentionally withhold annual tribute to Kokuga and manor stewards, then as a "solution" agree to pay a fraction of the owed tribute and oversee a section of the land at their expense, thereby acquiring portions of these manors and Kokuga estates and gradually usurping influence from the imperial court and aristocracy. Meanwhile, governors were able to extend military influence beyond their true means by reappointing *Jito* and Kokuga to the lowly bureaucratic post of *hikan*.



A CentaUr's Life





Even though Hime and her friends live in an enlightened era where equality among all sentient creatures rules the day, there are harsh reminders that things weren't always this way. As the girls struggle with their plans for the future, Shino-chan learns an important lesson about empathy for a creature smaller than herself. *A Centaur's Life* continues!

**SOME CENTAURS
ARE MORE EQUAL
THAN OTHERS!**



OLDER TEEN (16+)

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